

## A Special Visit to the Okanagan

By Garry Fletcher

It is not often that members of the Board of Friends of Ecological Reserves have the opportunity to meet with reserve wardens, hear their concerns, and visit their Ecological Reserves. In the second week of October, I was fortunate to be able to take the time off and have the opportunity to do so in the Okanagan region from Osoyoos to Vernon.

Leaving from Victoria on October 7, I picked up a friend in Vancouver, Niran Lella, who likes photographing interesting scenes in natural places. We had intended to make our first stop at **Whipsaw Creek Ecological Reserve** south of Princeton that afternoon, but by the time we found the Whipsaw Creek forest road and talked to a group of off-roaders who had just come down a very dusty and rugged logging road after a weekend of camping in the area, we decided that we would probably not make it in before dark. Added to that was the uncertainty posed

by not having a reserve warden to accompany us as there has been no warden appointed for that reserve.

The next day we stopped at **Field's Lease ER and Hayne's Lease ER** just North of Osoyoos. To me, as a biologist living in Victoria on the coast, this was an introduction to completely new types of ecosystems. The dry desert-like environment provided a new bewildering array of species. Field's Lease is probably the most extreme as the sagebrush, antelope-brush and rabbit-brush were quite dominating. Field's Lease is the smallest reserve we visited, but it is essential as it preserves, among the vineyards, a very rare form of ecosystem for Canada. The warden for both these reserves, Robert Calder was not available as he was away, but access was fairly obvious. Field's Lease is vulnerable as there is land to the west which has a build-up of dry materials and the reserve itself is full of years of dry

*Continued on page 2*

## Inside ...

A Special Visit to the Okanagan (Cont'd.) 2, 3, 6, 7 & 14

Enchanted Field Trip to Saturna Island 4 & 5

Elders' Interviews - Featuring Derek Thompson 10 to 13 & 15 to 19

Conservation Connection 8, 9 & 14

Presentation to the Special Committee on Timber Supply 20, 21, 22 & 24

Matt's Tales of Trials & Tribulations 23

Naturalist & ER Warden Remembered 24

A Study of University Researchers in ERs 25 & 26

Father of Ecological Reserves Biography 26

New LOG feature Back cover

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# The Log

Autumn/Winter 2012

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*Okanagan Visit continued from Page 1*

vegetation which makes one wonder if some of the unique vegetation could survive a wildfire in the area. The other obvious problem which must limit the use by wildlife was the surround-sound reverberations of the cannons used to scare predators from the vineyards.

Hayne's Lease has similar desert-like vegetation on the upper benchland level, but it is bisected by a road and a wetland composed of a series of Oxbow lakes from the Okanagan River flood plain. The ecosystem is also part of an International Bird Area. A group of Canvasback ducks, a Great Blue Heron, and other water birds were seen in the distance. The third ecosystem in the reserve is the steep western slope of Inkaneen or Throne mountain on the east side of the reserve.

We did encounter one example of research, on the upper sandy benchland – a temperature recorder, which we uprighted, as it appeared to have fallen over some time ago. We have no record so far of who had installed the recorder and not retrieved it. I was surprised to see the snowy buckwheat, a new species to me, in full bloom in this reserve. A fire swept through the upper part of this reserve some years ago. There was still blackened branches of antelope-brush, with only a few bushes showing some level of regrowth.

A large vineyard abuts the reserve on the south end. Here again, the sound from the bird-scaring cannons was dominant.

On October 9, we met up with

Laurie Rockwell in Summerland and drove up above the golf course to the edge of the **Trout Creek Ecological Reserve**. I was especially interested to meet Laurie as he has, for many years, been a regular contributor of his warden reports to the Friends of Ecological reserves website. Laurie provided an excellent overview of the reserve as we went on a long hike through it, encountering the different vegetation of the open grassland and ponderosa pine forest. Laurie emphasized the importance of only small groups being allowed to visit these sensitive Ecological Reserves.

On the southern boundary of the reserve, and wrapping around the west side lies the cliffs leading down to Trout Creek itself. We could hear it but not see it from our high viewpoint at the top of the cliff in the reserve. This natural boundary provides excellent security for the reserve on two sides. Laurie wanted to check the fence line on the steep north side. This fence is important for delineating the boundary to humans and to keep any stray cattle out. He had reported some areas where it was down and the local Parks office had been diligent in sending out Park employee Sarah Bunga, Park Warden to repair it.

In the afternoon it was back to Penticton to meet up with Kathryn McCourt for a trip out to **Mahoney Lake Ecological Reserve**. I had noticed from other photographers images I had posted previously on the

*Continued on page 3*



website, that October - November seemed to be good months in which to witness the bloom of purple sulphur bacteria in this meromictic (non-mixing) lake which is the best example in North America. We were certainly not disappointed.

Kathryn mentioned that in September the colour had not developed yet, and she sent pictures to show the contrast. The extremely dry year had led to a record low water level. This reserve is very accessible to the public, perhaps too much so as it was obvious that in the past, many have ignored the very clear sign with information on the uniqueness of the lake, and have tested the stability of the white salt-encrusted muds on the shoreline. On our way out we even met up with several young men who were going in with lunch and a bottle of wine.

This reserve poses the typical problem of preservation. Yes it is a beautiful phenomenon which you would hope anyone should be able to experience, but there will always be those who abuse the privilege. In BC there has to be a better focus on education of the difference between how one can use a regular park and an Ecological Reserve. There is such little representation of these rare areas in the province, that we risk destroying the very thing that makes them unique if we allow unlimited access.

On Wednesday we met up with Don Guild in Kelowna, and he drove us out to visit his two reserves, **Browne Lake ER** and **Big White Mountain ER**. The Browne Lake reserve actually



Rabbit-brush (*Ericameria nauseosa*)

starts in the forested area half-way up the ridge beside the lake and goes over the ridge to a meadow and marsh on the other side. The heavy forest with deadfall makes access to this reserve fairly difficult but abuses by some individuals were still evident. The meadow is very pristine and with both it and the surrounding forest of spruce, this is a very well situated reserve.

Our drive over to Big White Ecological Reserve was rather eventful as it led to probably the roughest terrain I had ever gone over in a vehicle. First, a boulder strewn snow-cat access road up the mountain with permission of the mountain facility staff, and later the decommissioned logging roads for a view of the lower part of the forested area of the reserve. I would hesitate to recommend either to anyone. Don was an expert guide and driver however, and we got in and out safely. Two threats are obvious in preserving the

integrity of this reserve. Although it is of considerable size, logging clearcuts are starting to approach close to the lower boundaries and the potential plans for further development of the Ski Resort, especially as a summer access facility could be disastrous for the fragile vegetation on the rim and slopes of the basin.

On Thursday morning it was off up the west side of Kalamalka Lake to Vernon where we met up with Dennis Seymour and Roseanne Van Ee who drove us up to a vantage point to look over the **Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve**. Unfortunately we did not have time to get down into the reserve to see the unique system of lakes. It was easy to appreciate why this place was made into an Ecological Reserve however, as the geology of the canyon and the terrain results in

*Continued on page 6*

# Enchanted Field Trip to Saturna Island ER

By Fred Beinhauer

**I**t was a day trip to an Enchanted forest. A mist-shrouded day where we viewed the big and the small. From big, tall fir, cedar, and hemlock trees at the macro end to small forests of mosses and fungi at the micro end.

On Saturday, November 3, 2012, FER Board members and guests took a field trip to what was once called the **Saturna Island Ecological Reserve # 15**. The original reserve consisted of two parcels of land totaling some 131 ha at 131 to 325 metres elevation. Saturna Island consists of two prominent east-west ridges separated by a deep valley. The reserve is situated on the summit and north-facing slope of the southern ridge. Though mapped as part of a dry subzone of Coastal Douglas Fir, the elevation (mostly over 250 m), and aspect (northerly) results in forest cover typical of a wet subzone. The entire reserve is forested with Douglas fir as the dominant tree but western hemlock and western red-cedar also occur.

These two sections of the original Saturna Island Ecological Reserve # 15 have been transferred from provincial to federal responsibility and are now part of the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve (GINPR) and contained within a larger area geographically as part of the "Saturna Island" portion of the GINPR.

Along for the field trip were Mike Fenger, Rick Page, Marilyn Lambert, Louise Beinhauer, and

me, Fred Beinhauer, a guest and sometimes co-webmaster. We took the 8:15 am ferry from Swartz Bay, Vancouver Island, to the little island of Saturna, population 325. There at the ferry dock we met up with Pam and Harvey Janszen, our guides and hosts for the day as normally the reserve is not open to the public. Pam and Harvey previously were wardens for the reserve as well as wardens for other ERs in the area for more than 30 years.



L to R: Marilyn Lambert, Rick Page, Pam Janszen, Harvey Janszen, Louise Beinhauer and Mike Fenger.

Pam is a mycologist well versed in fungi and mushrooms and Harvey a botanist. We were with experts who knew the area well, looked after it, and had extensive knowledge of the flora and fauna in the area. Pam has published many research reports on the fungi and Harvey

on the plants of Saturna Island (see links below).

From the Saturna Island ferry dock we proceeded to the reserve. We first drove to the summit of Mount Warburton Pike. This is at 400 metres and normally offers breath taking

*Continued on page 5*

## CALENDAR

**Friends of Ecological  
Reserves AGM  
to be held in March 2013**

Please check our website:  
[www.ecoreserve.bc.ca](http://www.ecoreserve.bc.ca) for details

**Botany BC 2013  
to be held in the  
Revelstoke/Golden area**

Visit their website for details at:  
<http://members.shaw.ca/botanybc/>



views of the Southern Gulf Islands. However the day, while somewhat mild, was very cloudy and dark, with rain, drizzle, and fog, so the view was less than 100 metres at the viewpoint.

We then proceeded on foot downslope to what was one of the original sections of the reserve at some 300 metres. The reserve is unlogged but surrounded by similar land including logged sections that have since grown back. It was foggy and rainy with very little light so as we entered the reserve the look was magical with tall trees of fir, hemlock, and cedar fading theatrically into the distance with a forest floor of vibrant green mosses sprinkled with fungi. Fallen tress covered the ground and many looked to have fallen by root rot.

There was evidence of burn marks from an old fire on some standing trees. There were no trails but the forest was rather open and easy enough to walk through. I was careful not to disturb any moss or fungi!

After a very dry summer, our visit was planned after the rains had started and the forest became moist so we could view the fungi the area is noted for. Pam proceeded to show us the many types of fungi and I began to take many pictures of what she showed us.

I also took many pictures of the mosses. I noted that the fallen trees looked like they contained little eco-systems on them with one patch of moss followed by another type of moss. I queried Harvey about this and he could identify all the types of mosses there.



As yet unidentified fungi from Saturna Island Ecological Reserve.

Having been amazed at all the types of fungi pointed out by Pam, I asked her if the biology of all fungi was the same. I was to discover that, no indeed, some fungi eat cellulose and others lignin. Some preferred certain types of trees and not others. Some are parasitic and others symbiotic; more details than I can remember.

We didn't see any wildlife. We heard some chickadees and kinglets and saw some deer droppings and a jaw and shoulder bone from a deer. We saw neither other people nor signs of human disturbance. Pam and Harvey said they never saw anyone there on their field trips.

Since the reserve has been transferred from the provincial government into the larger GINPR run by the federal government there is some concern about the future of the reserve, the research data collected to date about the reserve, and its protection and use as an ecolog-

ical reserve. As for the data, one example is that the research material previously available from the provincial website for ER # 15 is no longer available, so FER took it upon itself to collect, scan, and load this data onto its website. And previously, the ER had a warden and signage and now it has neither.

To view the research papers and photos produced by Pam and Harvey Janszen use the link <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/category/15/> to the FER website.

To see more photos of this field trip use the same link as mentioned above.

To see more information about the GINPR use this link for example

[http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-  
np/bc/gulf/visit/brochures.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/bc/gulf/visit/brochures.aspx).

Enjoy the pictures. It was a great day.

a valuable set of ecosystems. We were in the area of Kalamalka Lake Park where the locals have installed equipment on climbing cliffs. The heavy use of the park makes one wonder when access by mountain bikes and ATVs may start to be a threat to the Reserve itself.

In the afternoon Roseanne drove us out to meet up with Linda Kennedy for a trip to the summit of **Campbell Brown Ecological Reserve** and a walk down though the full length of the reserve on an old track made by her grandfather when this was his ranch many years ago. Her father gave the land to the province in 1975 and it was preserved by making it into an Ecological Reserve.

The seed pods of mariposa lilies dotted the grassland. Here, as in most of the Okanagan reserves we visited, the blue-bunch wheatgrass survived in abundance. However it is being encroached upon in many areas by the aggressive introduced knapweeds. BC Parks and many of the wardens have waged war on these invasives with pulling and removal campaigns and with the introduction of a biological control beetle. The surrounding land however has massive growths of this invasive which can out-compete the native grasses.

We were particularly impressed on the Campbell Brown Reserve with the many viewpoints where one can survey the length of Kalamalka Lake. Also, the west end of the reserve which we visited earlier that day, Cougar Canyon ER, was clearly visible just across the Lake.



Laurie Rockwell warden of Trout Creek Ecological Reserve.

On Friday, our last day was crowded with visits to three reserves. First we met up with Norbert Maertens and drove south from Lumby up to the **Buck Hills Road Ecological Reserve**. When this reserve was established, the road actually went right through it. Fortunately the road was repositioned and the old road bed is now overgrown with young pine and alder. A pleasant surprise on entering the reserve was a very tame Spruce Grouse which stayed on the ground and in the trees allowing us to photograph it. Norbert led us up to the core of the reserve where there is a rare stand of old growth larch. At this time of the year they were in full golden fall colour, forming a ring around a set of mounds of basalt boulders. These are the remnants of extinct columnar volcanic chimneys. We speculated on how the rocks

must have avoided being removed by the last ice age. Either this volcanic range existed only after the ice age, or it was part of volcanic cores that projected beyond the ice cap and have since slowly collapsed. Some geological research is need to clear up that one. The large loosely tumbled boulders provide a restriction of plant growth and ideal habitat for ground-dwelling mammals. Although we didn't see any that day, pikas are said to live here. Perhaps the eagle nest at the top of one of the tall larch trees had some limiting influence on them. It was clear that the thick pads of moss, vegetation and lichen on the rocks would not be able to handle excess traffic of people in this reserve.

Next, on to **Lily Pad Lake ER**, another jewel in the Ecological Reserve system. Evidence of someone seeking to make

*Continued on page 7*



access easier was seen on this reserve, as a chain saw had been used to cut sections out of deadfall trees and remove live saplings in order to make a path, probably for Mountain bikes or ATVs.

This is an ER that should be carefully monitored as it is too valuable a habitat for moose and other animals to be negatively impacted by those not aware of its ecological value.

On Friday Afternoon we met Rick Fairbairn on a forestry access road running right through the **Vance Creek Ecological Reserve**. While we stood there getting an orientation to the reserve, the traffic on this road was unlike what you would expect in an Ecological Reserve. The road provides access for recreational vehicles as well as several logging operations above the reserve.

This is one reserve where one seriously wonders whether there may not be too many parts compromised for the good of the integrity of the reserve, and why this road was not moved outside the reserve, as the narrow restriction of the bridge is smaller than that allowed on logging roads. The community seems to treat it as a regular park, with their own trails and facilities built inside.

In the purpose statement of BC Parks, it indicates that the forest here is a unique location for forestry studies, since it has old growth samples of five commercial tree species. The use by many others however, was obvious. We will have to check on whether any of this is done by permit. However the most



Warden Kathryn McCourt beside a sign posted by BC Parks explaining the unique properties of Mahoney Lake.

obvious threat to the reserve comes from the lack of foresight to provide adequate buffers in the watershed above the reserve. With several forest tenures in this watershed, one might anticipate serious modification of the stream bed and the lower forest in peak runoff from the stripped bare hillsides.

So in summing up, the following are common issues for most of the reserves :

1. Introduced invasive species, especially Russian and diffuse knapweed threaten many of the grassland native species.
2. Lack of buffer zones make access by motorized vehicles too easy in many reserves.
3. Regular and timely communication with BC Parks personnel is essential.
4. Research by academic institutions in Ecological Reserves is occurring much

less now than previously.

5. Adequate baseline surveys and follow-ups are necessary but not forthcoming.
6. Education of community user groups of wilderness areas is either lacking or not reaching those who seem oblivious to the values of preservation of ecological integrity in reserves.
7. Another issue facing most of the reserves was that of succession of wardens. Many wardens who helped create the reserves are now getting older. Perhaps an active recruitment program is needed in some areas, and the fact that Whipsaw Creek didn't even have a warden was of concern.

Finally I must mention how impressed I was with the knowledge and commitment of the eight Ecological Reserve Wardens whom I met along the

*Continued on page 14*

# Conservation Connection - 2012

By Mike Fenger

Both Garry Fletcher and Mike Fenger attended the 2012 Conservation Connection and represented Friends of Ecological Reserves at the FER booth at Royal Roads. Friends is a small non-partisan organization of volunteers and does not support any political party. Instead we promote the interests of ecological reserves with whatever political party has the mandate to govern.

Elizabeth May was invited to provide the Key Note speech at this year's Conservation Connection held on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) has been a catalyst and driver to coordinate Conservation Connection. Many smaller groups like FER have an opportunity to meet with other like-minded groups and attend working sessions of interest to the Environmental Non-government Organization community. FER so appreciates HAT and the HAT staff for providing coordination in this most excellent venue. Thank you Adam Taylor, Executive Director of HAT who introduced Elizabeth May. To learn more about HAT staff visit <http://www.hat.bc.ca/index.php/hat-about/staff>

Adam in his introduction noted that Ms. May was voted by *News Week* as one of the most influential women in North American and that she represents the Green Party. Elizabeth was quick to point out that she represents Saanich and Gulf Islands residents and not the Green Party.



Adam Taylor, Executive Director of Habitat Acquisition Trust addressing workshop group

Elizabeth cited John Muir in her introductory remarks, it was John Muir who in 1892 helped found the Sierra Club and his statement over hundred years ago, "*Nature bats last*", rings true today and that "*Everything is attached to everything*". Elizabeth worked for Sierra Club before entering politics. Working for conservation is about conserving relationships.

Elizabeth provided a political update on the omnibus budget legislation in which was embedded substantive changes to several Acts governing environmental protection. Changes to the federal *Fisheries Act* limit protection of fish habitat. A permit is no longer needed to "temporarily alter fish habitat" and habitat conservation must now be linked to a First Nations, commercial, or recreational use – the presence of fish is not enough to justify habitat protection. As a result, it is now possible to legally, permanently destroy fish habitat. The longstanding Department of Fisheries and Oceans policy of "no net habitat loss" in considering activities that may alter or destroy fish habitat appears to be a thing of the past.

The Conservative government cited "grass roots" complaints from farmers and municipal governments about the *Fisheries Act* as a rationale for changing the Act. However, four former Federal Fisheries Ministers (including Ministers of both Conservative and Liberal governments) spoke out strongly against the proposed changes. Their high profile and articulate clarification of concerns about the importance of habitat protection as keystone to sustaining fish however, did nothing to affect the course of changes to the Act. The end result is a gutting of the federal *Fisheries Act*.

There is a fear that a similar approach is in the works to gut the *Species at Risk Act*. It was predicted that there will continue to be a general retreat and downloading by the current federal government of their current responsibility to provincial governments. For example, cuts to existing grants of non-profit organizations who have responsibilities for monitoring populations under a Species at Risk Recovery Strategy limit the ability to assess success or

*Continued on page 9*



failure of recovery measures.

A similar gutting of the *Navigable Waters Act* is anticipated. Navigable water will be defined by the Federal Minister rather than on the basis of navigability.

In another example, Parks Canada has shifted staff such as Park Wardens from environmental management and protection roles to law enforcement. Moreover, wardens are expected to provide police-like functions in National Parks but with limited back up and support.

Ms. May's message was that we are seeing a wholesale retreat from environmental protection both in law and in staff. The message is extremely depressing as these values are public values and only the government can protect the public interest. If any positive message can be taken to conservation organizations it is only that "you are it". You are protecting the public interest in commonly held public assets. Some organizations are being labelled as "enemies of the state", despite being motivated by protection of commonly shared environmental assets. This is the time for grass roots organizations to hunker down and do the best they can. There is no help coming from government for environmental protection. The role of protecting our common environment for all Canadians has been abandoned by the Federal government.

There is a second omnibus bill in the works [since this talk the bill is now being assessed by opposition parties].

Ms. May also conveyed grave



*Mycena* species

concern over the approach of the current government to trade negotiations and agreements entering into far reaching and long term agreements with little or no public or parliamentary discussion or oversight. A recent agreement with China, for example, could impact Canadian sovereignty, limiting Canada's future ability to set environmental regulations that might affect Chinese business interests without having to "compensate" for "losses" incurred as a result of environmental requirements. The ability of sovereign Canadian governments at the federal or provincial level to make decisions on oil or gas pipelines or foreign investment by state owned companies, for example, may be severely constrained under the terms of the trade agreement.

There was an aside offered by Ms. May on the degree to which

control by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) over government has grown in recent years. The PMO now has an annual budget of \$10 million – the largest budget in the history of the office and every Government message is crafted by the office. As worrying is the change in the staffing and nature of the Privy Council which formerly provided "arms-length" and objective advice to the PMO from senior and independent public staff. The Privy Council now too is managed by politically appropriately aligned appointees.

By this point the assembled group was very depressed. What could be done to change things? Writing letters of concern was discussed and concerns about dismal and misuse of this information. Letters written by citizens raising concerns are tracked by the current government. This

*Continued on page 14*

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# Elders' Interviews - Featuring Derek Thompson

Interviewer Mike Fenger

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**D**erek Thompson has over 30 years of experience with the Government of British Columbia. His work concentrated primarily on parks planning, land use management and policy development including Ecological Reserves. He is also on the Elders Council for Parks.

Mike Fenger (MF). I am here with Derek Thompson a long time Parks employee and later on career civil servant with the Ministry of Environment. I want to find out a little bit about Derek's association with the environment and his role with Ecological Reserves (ER) and Protected Areas. Derek thank you for agreeing to an interview.

Derek Thompson (DT). You are welcome. I know one of the things you were saying to begin with was how did I come to have an interest in this field? That question has caused me to think quite a lot about my childhood. I grew up in the United Kingdom and I was really influenced by some of the teachers that I had. We lived near the Cotswolds and on a weekend when I was about 8 years old my parents would put me on a bus which would take me and others up to a little village called Winchcombe, where Mrs. Flood and son and her husband lived and we would go rambling in the woods all day and on Saturday. She was into bats so we would look for bats in the caves and she was just superb at flower identification and that really influenced me. Then other teachers influenced me later in school. We would go



for weekend study camps for biology and geography to central Wales and we would just ramble through the mountains with these obsessed teachers who were into lichens, earthworms and things like that. It was fun and I look back and realized that struck a chord for me; it was a big thing. My father, when we would go to the seaside, would always go rambling in the cliffs and as I got older I would tag along with him. He was really interested in ocean life and wandering through tide pools and poking around. We hired a rowboat once and rowed a boat miles from shore and his whole purpose was to try and see what was down there. So I grew up with it.

MF. So did that early identification with the outdoors lead towards a pursuit of an education in the natural environment areas?

DT. Well for a long time I thought I was going to be a doctor or something like that. Then my father and one of my geography teachers talked me into pursuing geography, geology and botany at university. Geography became a tremendous passion and mountain climbing and rock climbing in North Wales and in Europe. These sort of drove me. It was an adventure thing. Well it was just a love to understand how the world worked from a geologic and biological stand point. We would be driving around and I would be looking at river systems and trying to work out what had happened and how it had gotten to be like that. I am coming across as a bit of an obsessive here, a geek, it was deep for me.

MF. Somehow we have to get

*Continued on page 11*



you over to Canada how did that happen?

DT. One of my University professors persuaded me that I should go on with my learning after my first degree. He said you are obviously restless you should think about something like Canada or Australia and I chose Canada because I loved winter and I thought there was more to explore in Canada, more outdoor of course. When I got here and discovered the wilderness, it was wow.

MF. So did you come right to BC?

DT. Yes I came right across Canada by train in 1971 and that was a great geographic experience. Seeing the whole geography rolled out in front of you in the train window and talking to Canadians. I arrived in Victoria and I knew within days that this is the place that I wanted to be forever. It was just such an incredible environment here.

MF. Did you come here explicitly to go to school?

DT. Yes to UVic (University of Victoria) to do a Masters in Geography and I then was supposed to do a PhD. Quite by accident I got a summer job with BC Parks to do some research work. And I vividly remember walking into the head of planning after I had been there maybe a couple of weeks and said this is really fascinatingly good stuff can I stay for longer? And that was it. I was never interviewed for a job. It was his fault and I stayed forever inside the government.

MF. So you never went on to do your Doctorate degree you stayed with Parks?

DT. Yes I walked away from the



Dennis Seymour and Roseanne van Ee, Ecological Reserve Wardens for Cougar Canyon ER.

PhD. and as it happened it was a good decision because our first child was unexpectedly coming along and at that time we didn't know. But more particularly I just discovered that working in the environment in BC was just absolutely precious and incredibly interesting too.

MF. So as a park-planner was that your first encounter with Ecological Reserves? Maybe you could tell us a little about what the early days in ER were like.

DT. So I was as a park planner in Kamloops and I vividly remember my boss, then regional director, calling me into his office one day and saying this fellow Bristol Foster was coming to visit and he was a particularly dangerous person because he had these ideas about establishing Ecological Reserves. Didn't I know that ecological reserves weren't a good idea? It was the first time I had encountered ERs having

been focused on management plans for parks. I wondered why are they so bad? So I read the Act and some policy papers that Bristol had written and thought well there is a lot of sense in this establishing some areas for scientific inquiry. So when Bristol did come to town, I spent some time with him at meetings. I was junior at that time and he was head of ERs. I think that got to him personally meeting with a junior. I could tell there was a lot of, not animosity exactly, but a lot of doubts from the resources agencies about what this ER program was about, this was 1972-1973 and there was resistance to setting areas separately aside even inside of Parks at that time. But even then I felt there was a need to have areas that you could guarantee for a long time that science could be practiced and there would be a need to have a good

*Continued on page 12*

baseline of information for a scientific basis about ecosystems and management. Parks after all were about a number of other things as well. So that was my first encounter. It was one of doubts from senior executives in Parks. Of course that did tend to underlie the relationship between ER and Parks, unfortunately. It must have been so until the early '80s when Parks and ERs were brought under the same roof. So you can imagine the initial reaction from both sides about how was this going to go and what was going to happen? A lot of concern.

MF. Can we explore that historic resistance because there is resistance today to establishing ERs or we sense there is. There haven't been a lot established lately, maybe we could understand where some of that resistance rests to help open some of the doors to new ERs.

DT. Well in this province there has always been resistance to these so called single use areas set aside from all other productive economic activity. We know that from our involvement whether they are Parks or ERs. I think though in particular with ERs there was the added concern that there was going to be a set of international standards imposed on BC and that BC was going to have to measure up and be responsive to some external organizations on what was right and what was wrong. Government, particularly in BC, has always been proudly responsible for itself and whether it is a World Heritage designations or biophysical areas or whatever it is. There is a



Garry Fletcher, Linda Kennedy and Roseanne van Ee in Campbell Brown ER.

lot of concern about outside people. And then the notion that in the competition for lands and resources in this province, this notion that a particular entity, in this instance the ERs unit, this very small unit had some sort of hammer over everybody was resisted as well. And I think finally there was a suspicion about researchers and what were researchers going to do and how would we be able to manage them effectively.

MF. So some of those barriers are still there. Do you think there has been a change in the understanding of the benefits of research in natural areas?

DT. I can't speak very much about the very current state inside government because I have been outside the government since 2003. But I do feel that by the turn of the century the Minister of Forests really had come to understand the value of research and the importance to the Ministry program, good

basic ecological and other research. The research program had existed for quite a long time and I think the research program in the Ministry of Forests has been quite a supporter of ERs in one way or another and has used them quite effectively. And I think the value of protected areas in general was now recognized much more than it had been. How we went from 6% of the province to 14% protected as more people recognized the value of protection. That said though, there is always this concern about hard wiring boundaries and particularly entities into the system. Everybody is out to have flexibility to make decisions into the future. People are still a bit suspicious about rigidity and being bound into the future and that affects Ecological Reserves as these are more about permanence than some aspects of Parks because you have to have

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the certainty of long time lines to be able to undertake effective research in these areas. And there is a concern still about research that might change the environment as well, which is one of those unresolved issues around Ecological Reserves that some people have had. But I also think that since the turn of the century we have lost the thread of understanding the value of these areas. I understand that the research program in the Ministry of Forests is much less than it was and our general management of the environment has changed in terms that government is much less engaged than it was in stewardship. And that is bound to affect entities like protected areas generally and ERs because you are saying more public engagement needs to be there and yet we do not see the public stepping up in quite the way we might have anticipated certainly in the end of the last century.

MF. Now we have some questions about the early days. Are there some Ecological Reserves that you visited that had particularly good memories?

DT. Not so much in the early days but over the years and going to places like Gladys Lake obviously can't fail to impact you. What is the relationship between this ER and the general wilderness park management we try to do? And if ERs are truly an Ecological Reserve for science research purposes or trying to be something else in the case of smaller ERs here on the Island – that got battered around. These really are science research entities but they are so



Norbert Maertens, Ecological Reserve Warden for Buck Hills Road and Lily Pad Lake Ecological Reserves.

terribly tiny, like Mount Tzuhalem, is it a viable sort of unit? Then going out to the Oak Bay Islands and thinking how can this be an Ecological Reserve it is really a land management reserve with a lot of natural values but it is not necessarily a research unit, it isn't really an ecological benchmark, so much as it is a special zone. So I am finding myself going to these places so some of these entities that we set aside as ERs may not truly be what is within the bounds of what we meant to articulate as an Ecological Reserve. It is a protected area and should be a protected area and some of the park units needed more formal areas designated as research units established inside them. It is a kind of system which is kind of half here and half way there. I think that still prevails.

MF. You were very instrumental in the Parks and Protected

Areas Strategy (PPAs) and managing the increase from 6% to 14%. There weren't a lot of ERs added during that PPAs period and only one added recently in the Smithers area. What do you think that the opportunity or even the need for adding more of these is?

DT. I still believe that having an entity whether you call it an ER or a science reserve or whatever but having entities that are there with a guarantee as benchmarks or areas where you are going to have a long history of science research, well that is a very important part of the system. I don't think we paid a lot of attention to those sort of internal differentiations when we were doing the big PPAs because we were really trying to get large representative areas and small special feature areas identified and set aside. I think in the minds of a lot of us at that

*Continued on page 15*

way. I am not sure whether BC Parks really understands and appreciates the value it gets from these volunteers. Their knowledge of the history of the issues and the complexity of species in the ecosystems of the reserve must not be undervalued.

They are also often the first to observe significant events and report infractions to BC Parks. Further it emphasized the importance of informing the wardens of any permits for research or plans by BC Parks for modifications within the reserves.

It also seems hard to justify why any reserve in the province is currently without a reserve warden. BC Parks must place a higher priority on seeking out qualified individuals who are willing to take on the challenges of being a reserve warden equal to the passion which I saw demonstrated by these eight wardens in the Okanagan.

Our appreciation is extended to all eight of the wardens involved who willingly took the



Ecological Reserve Warden Don Guild with Big White ER in the background.

time to show us their reserves and review the management issues associated with them. It should also be mentioned that several of the wardens I met with were members of the North Okanagan Naturalist Club (NONC). They also maintain a gallery of photos of species of

the area – please see their website.

<http://www.nonc.ca/styled-9/index.html>.

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*Conservation Connection cont'd. from page 9*

means many in the room who have voiced concerns and signed petitions are already on lists kept by the Conservative Party. As political parties are not subject to Freedom of Information requests, the extent to which names and addresses of letter writers are tracked cannot be verified. Discussion and concern about the tracking and cataloguing of citizens' views for future reference on a national level was very chilling. Discussion and parallels were made to the cold war jurisdic-

tions that maintained files on many citizens and tracked "enemies of the state". Is this Canada 2012?

The conclusion was that demonstrations have no apparent effect on government actions or decision, and letter writing or petition signing gets you noted as a potential enemy of the national interest. What to do? One suggestion was to raise concerns at an individual and personal level with elected representatives – including federal Conservatives and to seek those who are willing to

question the loss of sovereignty and loss of environmental safeguards underway in the present course of Conservative government actions.

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time, we would be able to come back in a more refined way through management planning, so this part of this entity needs to be established with a strong recreational bias – this part of this entity for wilderness – this part of this entity for science repository for experimentation for benchmarking whatever. I think that and I would hope that is what future generations will do. I think that we have a lot of areas that are ideal for that sort of thing. We just haven't done the work around it and I think that is one of the next steps. I am uncertain about whether the current ER legislation or some refinement of that should be undertaken right out the blue. But in 1985, I fell heir to the ER unit and I felt very strongly at that time that a real thorough look at the legislation and the regulation would bring them into a better harmonization with the whole system that was evolving.

MF. And what sort of changes were you thinking of making? Allowing more multiple use inside them?

DT. I don't know about multiple-use. If I had my druthers the Parks and Protected Areas legislation would have described a system that came down in a series of zonations including ecological zonation within one really well thought out piece of legislation, both comprehensive and integrated. Really we only got part way into the legislated changes and sort of plunked pieces in without really integrating them in a well done way. And the thing the regulations, needed to be and I don't know what has happened to



Linda Kennedy with Wolf lichen (*Letharia vulpina*) on the lower branches

them since, but needed to be broadened into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to recognize the existence of very large Protected Areas system and that ERs are part of. To recognize that this tiny amount within that, I don't think is really sufficient recognition of what we need to have as guaranteed benchmarks to be effective. We came so far and then we stopped.

MF. I am going to interpret that to be possible advice to government to look over the Parks and Protected area legislation and think about what is better integration of what is already within the system.

DT. I certainly think so. It would be difficult to know what priority you place on that. We still have got important jobs to do just to make sure that we have the lands and resources that we need essentially inside the system fully inside and properly managed, if you triage your problems that is a secondary problem. The problem of

getting it fully integrated is secondary to making sure you have what is essential. We continue to go through a very fast and radical evolution of our environment in this province and we don't want essential pieces that we may have missed in the first couple of go rounds go through our fingers because our attention was to try and carve out a piece of legislation.

MF. Perhaps some thoughts on ERs and their original goals. They were began in a university setting with Dr. Krajina who was a real proponent of protected areas. He basically got a cross section of government senior civil servants, university scientists and others together and they advocated for the Act and began the ER program. It was convincingly led. What I am hearing is ERs in the early days were soon not that warmly embraced by government and still may not be warmly

*Continued on page 16*

embraced. Do you have some thoughts on leadership and making a world class protected area system in BC? How can you finesse that in the end of this first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

DT. A very essential thing and it was the same essential thing for the Protected Areas in general is this issue of public engagement. I think what we have seen with ERs is a small and very passionate group of people. The volunteer wardens and the stewardship they want to bring to the system has been incredible an enormous contribution to the system. If this is going to go any further there has to be a greater engagement and recognition in the general public. There has to be a demand that we need more of these things and an understanding of how these pieces are set in the larger system. How do you grow the volunteer stewardship into a greater general engagement is one question and challenge I think. In fact the challenge that over rides all of the others. I think the other one is to be engaged on a continuous basis with the key decision makers in government – you know, the senior bureaucrats and the Ministers. The bureaucracy is still incredibly influential here but perhaps not as influential as it was at the time when Vladimir Krajina and Bristol Foster were there and getting together. But it is still very influential so you need to focus on them and understand what their problems are and think about the modern version of Ecological Reserves and what a modern vision would be



Ecological Reserve Warden Rick Fairbairn.

within the context of what the province is trying to achieve now and how it fits into our international commitments to biodiversity and things like that.

MF. To ask this question and maybe I am leading you – Ers were largely a Ministry of Environment initiative, it was pretty much Ministry of Environment to the extent that staff were able. How do you engage other resource agencies in understanding the natural ecosystems and benchmarks and bringing in the universities? I guess this question is about looking across the agencies mandates to collectively learn something which I think was the original concept that Krajina used. He was stridently critical as a botany professor of foresters but he believed that ERs were for foresters and from that point of view I am not clear that we are even close to that concept yet.

DT. I think that by the '90s we saw a lot of engagement from Ministry of Forests' people and at least on this file and we had

leadership from Forests in land use planning. But now of course we have a very different mix of agencies and responsibilities. We have this set of policy ministries and one humongous sort of great delivery ministry which is responsible for stewardship and integration of all decision makers and things like that. So it is very difficult and on top of that, concepts like biodiversity and endangered species legislation and protection have come along since the notion of Ecological Reserves was first mooted. We have to think through now how this thing fits with both the concept and practices a little bit and so how does one apply these to the needs and interests of the decision makers in the Ministry of Resource Management. What argument will work to help the policy ministries put in place some practical solutions? I don't have the answers to that. I haven't really applied myself recently to that, but I think that is what you need to think about. You have to recognize that the time has moved on. It is very different to take on the same issues. You know our whole concept of limits have changed since the 1970s.

MF. There is one significant and now more legally recognized group and that is First Nations. They has always been a group with legal status but I don't know if the Parks and Protected areas had engagement outside of the provincial government. Do you have any thoughts on engagement with First Nations and this added level of complexity?

*Continued on page 17*



DT. It is a whole extra responsibility that government agencies have got as individuals and a whole new prescriptive on values. The concept that ERs stand for have some harmonization with First Nations interests, but here we get the potential collision of the Western science model with the traditional ecological knowledge model. There needs to be real engagement and discussion with some of the First Nations leadership about how do they see the science proceeding and the notion of long term and benchmarking certainly fits within the concepts that they hold dear. But the *ER Act* never really anticipated that and it is a great example of how things have drastically changed in the way that we approach management in this province. There is a need to spend some time with First Nations leaders talking about and seeing what would be needed to make an Ecological Reserves system that would have resonance with them.

MF. I don't know if you have looked at our strategic plan. We did it for our own guidance.

DT. I haven't seen it.

MF. Basically one of our roles is to support volunteer wardens, another is to attract research dollars into ERs and we did well and we had donors in the past and some ability to direct research. Another goal was to look at the resilience of the entire 148 ERs and whether they are adequate and where should we be advocating for more. We have a goal to do outreach for public understanding and the final goal is how do you keep a



*Fomitopsis cajanderi.*

non-government organizations happy and together so that people show up. So those are our strategic goals and if you can just spare a minute to think about the next five years and where you think FER should be more attuned.

DT. Those are good strategic goals and as I was thinking about this conversation we were going to have today and in my experience, the Friends have been particularly effective with the fostering of the volunteer wardens that is the strength and it's been the difference between yourselves and other conservation NGOs (Non-Government Organizations). You have that key of a strong base that is wired to people and reality on the ground. I would hope that you could continue that. It differentiates you and it has always been something that the agency could come back to and has benefitted a lot from. Other groups I have been involved with over the

years have not succeeded in developing that kind of ground swell. I think the thing would be, were I in your position, to think about looking forward and how do we renew? How do we attract other people in? How do we attract different interests? How do we attract donors? And it relates to what I said about renewing the purpose and the intent and thinking through what has changed here in BC and what hasn't changed and what response you need to that to come clear on that and be able to create an advocacy for that new model and seeing if it resonates with people, especially with young urban people. We are increasingly talking about how to engage this increasingly youthful market, teachers. I always go back to what got me in here and it was my teachers and my family's interest. So how do you engage again with teachers and with

*Continued on page 18*

universities? Again the university system has changed dramatically since the 1970s. In the 1970s we had three universities in this province – all in the south all in the major urban areas and now we have got universities in most of the significant communities in the province. There are a lot of young professors and a lot are involved in the environment and resources. Is there a way to get to them and their students really engaged with programs like this and maybe it is not just about Ecological Reserves. If Ecological Reserves are part of a little bit larger packet that relates to the management of biodiversity, research and information and knowledge management.

MF. Many of us were very disappointed when government decentralized ER management. For FER, having an ER coordinator and a warden coordinator in Victoria was easier and a more effective way for this very small group to engage. It is very hard for us now to deal with nine regions and nine different people. I don't know how or whether we advocate for an ERs headquarters person again. Is that a reasonable pitch for us to make to government?

DT. It is going to be an uphill push. When government is consciously going in the other direction to advocate for more of something that they have decided not to do is not always useful. Not meaning that you shouldn't advocate for an ER coordinator because if that is one of the essential things that you want and you think that is absolutely key, then you need to



*Hericium abietis*

build a case for it, but be aware that you are flying in the face of a hurricane. I think you really need to ensure that there is an understanding, a conscious intent to manage for these values. If that is lodged effectively in those people who are responsible out there in the field, it is going to be far more powerful in this organizational set up than it is if it is someone isolated in Victoria who the guys on the ground don't listen to. That is the challenge we all are going to have. These nine regional Assistant Deputy Ministers and their teams are going to be very powerful Czars and Czarinas out there and how do we all engage with them across the landscape? You are not the only ones that are going to be challenged that way and who might you join forces with, who have similar interests and needs for advocacy to deal with those people out there because my read is that government is not going to go back and it will change these things as it always does. It is forced to do what is happening because of the realities of funding and because of the reality of general intent and it is unlikely to find change in those sort of things.

MF. When you say that government is unlikely to go back I tag



*Strobilurus trullisatus*

on the phrase “to a leadership role on land stewardship” is that too broad?

DT. Yes. I was thinking about going back to an organization structure that was more centralized and hierarchical. In terms of land stewardship I am not ready to give up on that. You have got a position inside of government that is the Chief Forester's position that is supposed to take leadership on land and resource stewardship. So I would be saying to the Chief, if he is accepting any advice, okay you have got a stewardship responsibility for much more than forests and annual allowable cut. You are supposed to be the kind of the resource steward from a land and resource steward perception in your Ministry and we think that ERs are a greater part of that and we see this part of the job and this and this and so work it there. I don't think that government has made some sort of decision and they are on an irrevocable path away from land stewardship. I am worried at the lack of planning and the lack of recognition of what are the values that we are managing towards in this province for natural conservation and recreation sort of values. I see this more as an opportunity for

*Continued on page 19*



people to advance advocacies rather than a complete abrogation of it. I hope it is just an opportunity.

MF. You mention being a regional planner then a planner in headquarters and eventually running the Ministry at the Deputy level. That happened fairly quickly after Kamloops? When did you become Deputy Minister for the Environment?

DT. I was head of Parks planning 1980s and early '90s and head of land use planning in the mid-90s and a deputy in the late '90s. Looking back on it, it all happened very fast and a long time ago. And I am really glad that I had the early experience in the field because I think it grounded me for those later things that came along and I never thought to be Assistant Deputy Minister let alone Deputy Minister. When I was asked to do those things I felt that having had that work experience in the field was enormously important to be able to do it.

MF. I am sure that many of your staff were pleased to have someone who had come up through the ranks.

DT. And knew too much about things. The danger is that you think that you might know too much and you interfere with people.

MF. Well I want to thank you for those insights into the early ER and Protected Area days. We want to know if you are still keeping up with changes in conservation?

DT. Interestingly yes. I say I retired from government but I didn't retire from life and I am a lifelong learner. I had some amazing opportunities in the last



*Marasmiellus candidus*

few years to look at things in the international scene and to see what is going on and what isn't going on in countries in South America and Southeast Asia and elsewhere and one of the interest things is they are in the process and have passed us. They are lapping us. They are doing things in the environment and resource management that we only dreamed of. Things like the operationalization of payment for ecological services. Things that go well beyond where we were at. The Chinese are putting enormous amounts of energy, resources and money into protected areas establishment and attempts to manage in the face of huge pressures. They can learn a little bit from us but we can learn an awful lot from them. Meanwhile BC has kind of stood on its laurels for a little bit. I hope that we are going to see some re-invigoration. The public is going to say to the government, hey that was good what we did in the 1990s but we continue to have some needs and duties that we need to see performance

on. I know that there are lots of really excellent people inside the government. I am so impressed with young people that are coming into government service now their academic credentials and their abilities are way beyond where I was at their age. I am still committed to help them. I was at the Royal Roads University where I show up and talk to them from time to time, but my knowledge about the details of what is going on in BC is not anywhere near where it was. I have been away and I am aware today of what is happening in Indonesia. I will continue to have some involvement.

MF. We really want to thank you for this retrospective, fast overview and we intend to use at least some of this to reach a broader audience and deliver a message that maybe we are resting on our laurels. You have certainly helped us and so have the other interviewees. Wonderful and thank you.

DT. I hope it was useful.

# Presentation to the Special Committee on Timber Supply (SCOTS)

By Mike Fenger

*This presentation was given on July 10, 2012. SCOTS is to make recommendations to government in response to the loss of timber supply due to the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation.*

## Executive Summary

**W**e support the need for a change to the status quo. We cannot support harvesting of conservation forest reserves as the solution to timber supply as this would reduce environmental standards and therefore would be in conflict with your terms of reference which call for high environmental standards.

We support public land ownership and the crown land model we have today. We do not see private-land tenure and even offering exclusive operating areas on Crown land as good economics or a means to sustain environmental values. Globalization has changed forest companies and they are less able and willing to steward public resources as they focus on shareholder return.

We are concerned about the scope and focus of the consultations as most of BC's population lives outside of the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) area yet the consultations have been held largely away from urban centers. Forests are held equally in trust for all British Columbians, yet a subset of the population has had greater input. MPB changed our forests and we need to change our thinking about future forests in the mid- and longer- term. It is time BC had a larger forum and process to build a vision and



Saturna Island Ecological Reserve.

strategy about all of the provincial renewable resources. A larger forum and process need to have sufficient scope to examine managing ecosystems to sustain forest values (environmental stewardship), the economy, resource rents and communities stability. We hope SCOTS can be a catalyst for a larger forum with a broader scope.

Natural disturbances are currently addressed in Timber Supply Reviews (TSR) through salvageable losses and operational adjustment factors. What is wrong with this approach is there is no probability of loss of timber from natural disturbances shown in allowable annual cut (AAC) forecasts. Without disturbance probability, we overstate timber supply. There is an urgent need to change TSR to include natural disturbance probabilities so we do not continue to show unde-

liverable volumes with regard to future timber supply. This means using existing disturbance ecology research, investing in new disturbance studies and adding ecologists to the TSR forecasting team in government. This would help to ensure credible inclusion of future disturbances to allow for more realistic estimates of future timber supply.

The Chief Forester is delegated AAC responsibilities as outlined in Section 8 of the *Forest Act*. This is a very good approach in legislation for setting harvest rates on public land. It is data informed, shows assumptions and analysis and allows public review and input (notwithstanding the probability issues raised above). Retain section 8 of the *Forest Act* and the role of the Chief Forester

*Continued on page 21*



and do not allow this to become a cabinet decision.

TSR also needs to do quantitative multi-resource value forecasts and report on the condition of habitats for fish, wildlife and biodiversity, as well as on recreational views and all non-timber values and resource values outlined in the *Forest Range Practices Act*. Reporting on timber and the economics of timber alone is not consistent with the legislated intent for section 8 of the *Forest Act*.

BC needs a Chief Biologist, with legislated responsibilities for setting conservation and harvest targets for species. This legislation can be patterned after that of the Chief Forester. A Chief Biologist would work with the Chief Forester to set habitat goals and use forecasts linked to species needs for the next 30 to 50 years when habitat supply is predicted to be at a critical low.

Government data shows significant over-capacity in milling even after the 30 - 104% boost to AAC for expedited beetle wood salvage. Current mill capacity can be sustained in the mid-term without lowering environmental standards if milling capacity and expectations are kept to one shift level for Lakes and Quesnel, and at an 80 and 90% of capacity for mills in the Prince George and Williams Lake area.

There was to be a conservation up-lift as well as AAC up-lift. More stand-level retention was left during salvage operations, however landscape level tactical plans that could have mitigated impacts on all the forest resource never occurred. These landscape



*Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*

level plans are still needed but now will be looked at through the lens of how to restore values and sadly without the benefits that could have minimized impacts. We hope this committee will advocate for a forest restoration program as well as landscape/watershed scale plans needed for implementation. Restoration and reforestation programs mean employment.

We hope that this committee supports the advice of the Auditor General (AG) and asks government to set clearly defined timber objectives and we suggest this should be done in the larger context for all renewable resources. It may even be premature for this committee to set objectives for some supply units before the AG's advice is acknowledged as sensible and acted on.

It may be realistic to seek mid-term timber supply from small diameter younger trees not from

current older forests which support recreation and conservation objectives. Protection of established understory regeneration in all stands and a change in current harvest approaches also may provide a significant boost to mid-term timber supply. It is unfortunate that this understory protection was not mandated during salvage and implemented over the last eight years. There are also questions on how many green trees were harvested during salvage and to what extent this decreased the mid-term supply and revenue.

A Federal/Provincial cost share agreement of not less than five years and not less than 200 million for reforestation and restoration is needed. The need today is greater than it was during previous Forest Renewal Develop Agreements because of the MPB. On the ground, restoration must be supported by

*Continued on page 22*

strategic assessments (where and how much) and implemented through tactical landscape/watershed plans.

The Biogeoclimatic zones in which MPB is resident have the lowest amount of land within the Parks and Protected Areas (PPA) system in BC. Protected Areas will increase in value in future and help maintain BC's biodiversity. Five percent of the Ponderosa Pine and Interior Douglas Fir zones and 6% of the Sub boreal Spruce and Boreal Black and White Spruce zones are protected. Considering climate change, it is doubtful that this will be sufficient to insure the sustaining of BC's biological legacy in these areas. A commitment to improve the amount protected is needed.

The low percentages of PPA in the MPB zones could be improved by adding Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) to the PPA system. Parks and Protected areas designation offers greater long-term security and protection of conservation functions than OGMAs appear to have now.

A lot of time was invested in strategic land use plans and the zones and objectives. This should not be unilaterally changed without the re-engagement of planning table stakeholders in some manner, such as recalling and supporting monitoring committees. Even then these planning groups need access to technical support sufficient to provide balanced analysis to understand the impacts of increasing timber supply, the impact to all resources and the need to change the status quo.



*Mycena* species

Allowing some relaxation of environmental standards in a Timber Supply Areas (TSA) such as the Lakes area would divide BC into zones with differing environmental standards. We strongly support the need for consistent provincial standards. These are both fair to all tenure holders and fair to all BC citizens. We hope to see the option of harvesting conservation reserves removed and strong support for a level playing field endorsed. It is not clear that there is wide spread support either in industry, or by the Association of BC Forestry Professionals for reducing environmental standards. Reducing standards also has implications for forest certification.

Changing the conservation and mature forest retention requirements is premature in light of the absence of data on whether current practices actually sustain the full suite of forest resources values and objectives already in legislation.

The Forest Resource Evaluation Program (FREP) in government has not reported and measured many of the values in the eight years since the new result-based code has been in effect. It is possible that current forest practices do sustain values and more rather than less old forests may need to be retained.

Tenure reform options require a great deal more information to come to a decision, and we hope to see an independent panel with appropriate investigative powers, and with members approved by a number of stakeholders. Further investigation is needed to understand returns to the Crown (revenue), investments in mid- and long-term timber supply, and the ability to sustain a full array of forest values such as water, fish, wildlife, forage, visual and recreational resources. To be credible and address the greater public good, the independent

*Continued on page 24*



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# Matt's Tales of Trials & Tribulations of Ecological Restoration on Island ERs

By Jenny Feick

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On the evening of Thursday October 18th, Matt Fairbairns of Aruncus Consulting educated about 30 people at the University of Victoria as he relayed the trials and tribulations of ecological restoration on island ecological reserves near Victoria.

After outlining the purposes of ecological reserves, he focused much of his presentation on the history and rogue's gallery of alien invasive species on Trial Island, comparing and contrasting experiences there with those in the less disturbed Oak Bay Islets Ecological Reserve. We learned that of the 250 plant species on the Trial Island Plant Checklist, one third are non-native, and that plant species exist on Griffin and Alpha Islands that do not exist on Trial, Chatham or Discovery Island. Matt illustrated his talk with high quality photographs of many of the native and non-native plant and animal species in these ERs.

Some of the controversial issues Matt explored during his talk included: a) the question of restoration goals in ecological reserves, b) the effectiveness of various methods of managing invasive non-native plant species, c) legal and ethical issues in controlling invasive animal species like Canada Geese, d) precautionary versus evidentiary approaches to species at risk recovery, and e)



White-top aster (*Aster curtus*)

the efficacy of three different approaches to setting population goals for species at risk.

The presentation was the third in a series of talks entitled "Restoration on the Bay", hosted by the Restoration of Natural Systems Program, part of the School of Environmental Studies at UVic. Each October the RNS Program hosts guest speakers on a different theme related to ecological restoration in the Victoria area followed by restoration walks on the same topics in the following February. For more information about the field trip related to Matt's talk, or the speaker series in general, contact Dr. Valentin Schaeffer at

[Schaefer@uvic.ca](mailto:Schaefer@uvic.ca).

Matt kindly allowed the Friends of Ecological Reserves to post his PowerPoint file for this talk on the FER website where you can view it at <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/?s=restoration+efforts+at+Oak+Bay+Islands>.

During his talk, Matt acknowledged the work of many others, including: Marilyn Lambert, the volunteer warden for the Oak Bay Islets ER, Brenda Beckwith and Cheryl Bryce for their work with local First Nations, and the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team (GOERT).

panel would need to be at arms-length from government and report in a non-partisan forum.

The committee's terms of reference indicate a need to be mindful of a balanced budget and trade arrangements. Revenue is a means to balance budgets and it is unclear if the incentives to salvage pine (such as royalties of \$0.25/cubic meter) were appropriate or whether there should have been funds from salvage used to build a Forest Investment fund. This means looking at timber pricing and current arrangements for setting stumpage.

Since energy from fuel is within the terms of reference, it is prudent to again engage BC Utilities Commission with a formal advisory role to on electricity rates, energy development and all energy options including energy from wood. This may require a change in the *Clean Energy Act*.

The mill explosions and deaths in Burns Lake and Prince George were a tragedy and led to the formation of your committee. We do not support harvesting of reserves in this area as the solution to timber



Bear's-foot sanicle (*Sanicula arctopoides*)

supply. Nor do we believe that government should provide guarantees of timber supply that are sufficient to bolster investment and guarantee wood supply for a new mill in Burns Lake. We believe alternate solutions better address the public good, including those who live in Burns Lake. We support a need for a change to the status quo.

Thankfully BC has a high percentage of public land referred to as "Crown land" and so all British Columbians have a legitimate stake in what happens and will share the consequences of your recommenda-

tions. At current population levels, each citizen has approximately a 44 ha share in the province. We support the public land ownership model and do not see private-land tenure and offering exclusive operating areas as a solution to short- and long-term timber supply management or as a benefit to British Columbians.

To see the full presentation and the 22 recommendations made please go to our web site: [http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Timber\\_Supply\\_Committee\\_Presentation\\_FER\\_2012-final-3.pdf](http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Timber_Supply_Committee_Presentation_FER_2012-final-3.pdf)

## Naturalist and Ecological Reserve Warden Remembered

from the September 2012 Shuswap Tourism Newsletter

Long time champion of trails and the natural world in the Shuswap, John Coffey, died peacefully in his sleep Saturday night after a short, brave battle with cancer. John was a co-founder of the Shuswap Trail Alliance, lead trail steward, route finder, naturalist, and guide. He was an active member of the Shuswap Naturalists, Shuswap Outdoors, the Kamloops Outdoors Club, and the Larch Hills Nordic Society. We

have lost a great friend, mentor, and advocate in the wilderness who taught so many of us to breathe deeply and open our hearts to the natural world.

John's legacy of trails includes the Larch Hills Traverse, Reinecker Creek, Scotch Creek Hlina, Hyde Mountain Lookout, Cedar Circle, Raspberry Hill, the Larch Hills Snowshoe trail system, and the new Rubberhead trails, to name a few – all created from John's

leadership in the field. He monitored all the major alpine routes in the region Joss, Skyline, Gorge, English, Queest, Eagle Pass; worked with biologist Jeremy Ayotte to create the Environmental Adaptive Trail Monitoring program; and helped to set up the new Shuswap Trail Stewards program. John also worked tirelessly protecting the Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve as a volunteer warden with BC Parks.



# A Study of University Researchers in ERs Conducted by FER

A summary by Mike Fenger

The FER board was so pleased when Elyse Matthews contacted us in 2011 and said she would like to volunteer for us. After some brain storming at the Board meeting with Elyse, we thought that because she was an undergraduate student at UVic, it provided a good opportunity to gauge teaching staff awareness of Ecological Reserves.

Many of the early studies in ERs were led by UVic and UBC staff and their students who collected data and completed field studies in ERs. An appreciation of how much was accomplished by university staff in the past can be gained by looking at the research sections of individual reserves on the FER website. There was an awesome amount of work done and we are pleased to have this on line.

To gauge current understanding of ERs and potential natural areas research, a questionnaire was designed by Elyse and amended by Board members. A list of who to contact in the natural resources departments was drawn up. Elyse then proceeded to get approval from the Department Heads and go through the Ethics Review process needed before being granted permission to approach staff and ensure their anonymity.

At this point the volunteer aspect of this project had grown to what was more than a reasonable expectation for a full time student, so FER provided a budget for Elyse in recognition and appreciation for her work.



Coastal Scouler's catchfly (*Silene scouleri* ssp. *grandis*)

This project took over a year. The letter sent to those who participated appears below. It is an understatement to say FER was disappointed in the low level of response as it makes it impossible to draw any conclusions. We hope to follow up with Department Heads as we believe there is a role for university staff, graduates and undergraduates within the context of natural areas research, restoration and that Ecological Reserves need again to become central for education and field study.

Hello (Name and Department)

Thank you for being one of the 38 scientists that Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) asked to provide information to guide our volunteer efforts on current and future research in Ecological Reserves (ERs). Our survey of University of Victoria

staff was also to get a better understanding of your knowledge of Ecological Reserves to focus our efforts in recruiting staff and students for research in these areas.

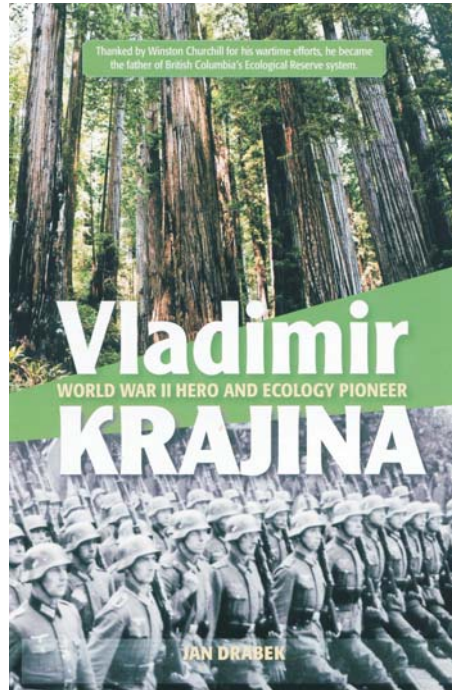
Ecological Reserves are areas specifically set aside in legislation for natural areas research. In a recent review of existing research on ERs, it was evident that much of what has been learned to date about Ecological Reserves was due to University researchers and their students.

FER is a small three decades old volunteer organization with no paid staff. Thankfully FER had Elyse Matthews, a University of Victoria undergraduate student, to help us navigate the necessary Ethics Review needed to approach staff through a questionnaire and obtain the expected data. The Ethics

*Continued on page 26*

# A Biography of the Father of Ecological Reserves of BC

In 1939 the botanist Vladimir Krajina joined the Czech Resistance and quickly became one of its leaders. Incredible escapes from the Gestapo followed while some 20,000 radio messages were sent by his group to London, among them those about the pending invasion of the Balkans and of the Soviet Union. As the strongest anti-Communist Party's general secretary he escaped from the country on skis after the Communist takeover. Personally thanked for his wartime effort by Winston Churchill, Krajina came to the University of British Columbia where as a professor of botany he battled the forest barons and their practice of clear-cutting and slash burning. He then turned his attention to saving pristine areas of the province,



earning the title of Father of the BC Ecological Reserve Program, since replicated throughout Canada. As a Companion of the Order of Canada, he returned

triumphantly to Prague in 1990 to receive the Order of the White Lion, the highest Czechoslovak award, from President Vaclav Havel. Krajina died peacefully in Vancouver in 1993 as one of those happy individuals who had achieved practically everything they had set out to do in life.

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\$21.95. Available from  
Ronsdale Press

<http://ronsdalepress.com/books/vladimir-krajina/>

Visit our website at:  
[www.ecoreserves.bc.ca](http://www.ecoreserves.bc.ca)



*Study of University researchers cont'd. from page 25*

review took considerable time and we are thankful for Elyse and her perseverance.

Existing research reports for the 150 ERs can be found on the FER website <http://.ecoreserves.bc.ca/>. In the past, there has been a greater level of field research and undergraduate activity in ERs and a much higher level of commitment by staff at the University of Victoria who have been leaders in generating baseline data. However over the last decade, University and student contributions to research in ERs has diminished. Through this survey, FER hopes to better understand current awareness and current

understanding of ERs and to again attract new University lead research into natural ecosystems and ERs specifically, and to gain strengthened relationships between staff and students at the University of Victoria and research and learning in ERs.

We are extremely grateful to those who responded to our request for data but are disappointed in the low level of response (only 9 out of 38). This small sample does not allow Elyse to draw conclusions about how to best engage from this point on. However, we speculate that there is a very low understanding by the University's staff about the

purpose of ERs, their focus for research and their vital role as ecosystem benchmarks.

To help you understand the role and legislated purpose of ERs, FER has included a recently published map and narrative on ERs in hopes of recruiting more researchers and students into studies and research. We remain optimistic that more of you will step forward and see the mutual benefit for you and your program by engaging with ERs. For anyone interested in helping we will gladly provide an overview of the ERs in BC and assistance towards new alliances. Thank you for your time.



# FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Box 8477 Stn Central, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1

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# What's New on FER Website

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Hello readers of the LOG. Thank you for spending a few minutes with this newsletter. The LOG has a long history which predates the internet, but FER is moving towards greater use of internet as a way to provide information. This issue of the LOG contains a number of articles such as the work by Matt Fairbarns on the restoration of Oak Bay Islands (page 23), and a presentation by Mike Fenger on behalf of FER to the Special Committee on Timber Supply (page 20). The full articles however can be found on the FER website. There are also a number of articles which did not make the LOG at all but are posted at <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/news/>

For those of you who rely primarily on the LOG to get a glimpse into our activities, we include this new section on recent web postings which are available if you click on the "News/Reports" menu in the top bar. For all of the postings on any particular Reserve, click on the "What's New" link on the main index page of the reserve. If you have any reports or information relevant to any reserve which is not yet posted, please send it along to us (see the "Contact" link).

Here are some of our latest postings which we think you will find interesting:

- ⌘ [Rehabilitated Brown Pelicans: Race Rocks ER #97, Nov. 2012](#)
- ⌘ [Wardens report on Reptile Observations in Campbell Brown ER 2004-2012.](#) (This is password protected and the password will be provided to other researchers after evaluation of their need to know.)
- ⌘ [A number of monthly warden's reports by Laurie Rockwell on the Trout Creek reserve.](#)
- ⌘ [Letter Sent to Gulf Island National Parks Advisory Committee with regard to former ERs on Brackman and Saturna Island](#)
- ⌘ [Restoration Efforts at Oak Bay Islands and Trial Island Ecological Reserves](#)
- ⌘ [Picture Galleries and report from 11 Ecological Reserves in the Okanagan](#)
- ⌘ [Updated map/brochure of BC's Ecological Reserves](#)
- ⌘ [Shuswap Trails Champion and Naturalist Remembered](#)
- ⌘ [Presentation by FER to the Special Committee on Timber Supply](#)

## The Log




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