



New Minister



*Honourable Joyce Murray,
Minister of Water, Land and
Air Protection*

Joyce Murray was appointed Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection on June 5, 2001.

Ms. Murray was first elected in 2001 to represent the riding of New Westminster.

Before her election to the Legislative Assembly, Ms. Murray was board chair and director of planning and quality for Brinkman & Associates Reforestation Limited, a silviculture company based in New Westminster that seasonally employs 1,000 young people in British Columbia's forests, across Canada and internationally. She worked as a treeplanter, crew boss and camp cook in remote areas of British Columbia before becoming a founding partner with Brinkman in 1976.

She earned her master of business administration from Simon Fraser University and received the faculty of business dean's convocation medal as the top MBA graduate.

Ms. Murray was the regional winner of the Canadian Airlines Export Award Program in 1996 and earned the Quality Council of British Columbia's Bronze Level Excellence Award in 2000 on behalf of her company's quality program.

She was also a member of the Greater Vancouver Regional District solid waste management plan monitoring committee and the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, and a director of the Community Forestry for Africa Network and the Employee Share Ownership & Investment Association. In 1995 she was a silviculture representative to a land and resources steering committee of Forest Renewal BC.

Joyce Murray and Dirk Brinkman live in New Westminster and have three children. □

Columbians expect while at the same time revitalizing British Columbia's position in the Canadian and global economy.

Water, Land and Air Protection

Comprised primarily of staff members from the former Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, the ministry will also incorporate the Green Economy Secretariat and staff from BC Fisheries who were responsible for freshwater fisheries. The ministry will provide corporate leadership on the future direction for environmental protection in British Columbia. The new ministry will ensure that the quality of British Columbia's water, land and air is maintained or improved and that fish, wildlife and protected areas are properly managed.

To perform this role, the ministry will place emphasis on the following practices:

- Applying innovative regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to protect British Columbia's environment

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New Ministries Announced

On June 5, British Columbia's new government confirmed its commitment to sustainable development of the province's natural resources while protecting environmental values by creating two new ministries.

These two new ministries, created from elements of nine different agencies, are the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection headed by the Honourable Joyce Murray and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management being led by the Honourable Stan Hagen.

Both ministries have been tasked with delivering the strong environmental protection that British

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VISIONS is produced six times per year by BC Parks, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to maintain commitment to quality service and stewardship and to encourage innovation by everyone directly involved or interested in BC Parks.

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Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is September 1, 2001.

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- Ensuring compliance with environmental standards and regulations
- Forming partnerships with other governments, the private sector and communities to foster stewardship of the environment in British Columbia
- Providing reliable, science-based information on the state of the environment, and
- Encouraging the development and application of innovative technologies and processes that will prevent or reduce releases that impair water, land and air quality.

Sustainable Resource Management

Many public and private stakeholders agree that British Columbia's natural resources – including Crown land and water – should be managed in a balanced and sustainable manner. The new Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management represents an important step by government to balance the need for strong economic growth with sound environmental principles.

Previously, a number of ministries and agencies were responsible for resource management, policy and planning, leading to overlap and delays in decision-making. By bringing together all land planning, registry and information operations into a single ministry, a new level of service has now been created that was not possible in the past.

Staff from nine different agencies and former ministries will be brought into the new ministry, including: Land Use Co-ordination Office; Environment, Lands and Parks; Forests; Energy and Mines; Small Business, Tourism and Culture; Agriculture Food and Fisheries; Aboriginal Affairs; and, the Lands and Titles Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General.

BC Parks

BC Parks, formally under the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, now falls under the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. The designation, management and conservation of ecological reserves, provincial parks and recreation areas will continue as the division's primary mission. □

Reprinted courtesy of the *Cowichan News Leader*, June 10, 2001

Restrictions about Park Protection

by Dave Chater

As a result of a letter from Berry and Jenny Sintnicolaas in the May 23 *Leader* and an article in the May 13, *Pictorial*, readers may assume BC Parks is targeting "off roaders" with recent access restrictions within Chemainus River Provincial Park. This is not the case.

BC Parks' overriding principle in the management of the provincial park system is the protection of the natural and cultural values within individual parks and the system in general. Recreational activities, while an important component of the provincial park system, may only be considered if they do not negatively impact the park's natural and cultural values.

In the case of Chemainus River Park human use (caused by a cross section of uses) has severely impacted the park's natural and cultural values. As an interim measure to address this situation, BC Parks has installed gates and barriers to limit the movement of motorized vehicles within the park. The park is not closed to public access, but visitors will notice motorized access will now be limited to defined areas within the park.

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Decisions that affect the long term management and use of a provincial park such as the type and extent of recreational activities appropriate for a particular park are formulated through a park management planning process (which includes public consultation) and impact assessments. These planning and impact assessment processes assist in providing for appropriate recreational activities in the context of ensuring the impacts associated with recreational use on the natural environments within a park are minimized.

Currently, a management plan for Chemainus River Provincial Park does not exist. Until a management plan is completed, BC Parks will continue to implement measures that reflect a precautionary approach within the park, even if it means restricting human use within the park. BC Parks would also welcome the participation of interested individuals and groups to assist in the retention and protection of the park's values. Possible projects for volunteers and groups could include park patrols, refuse removal, plant and animal inventories and replanting of natural vegetation.

Anyone interested should contact the South Vancouver Island District office at (250) 391-2300. □

David Chater is the District Manager of BC Parks South Vancouver Island District.



Eagle Rescue

by Don Lassey, South Vancouver Island District

On June 21, while at Tod Inlet in Gowlland Tod Provincial Park working on a project, another Park Ranger and I were made aware of an unusual situation.

A mature bald eagle, while munching on a purloined chicken from a local farmer's barnyard, was harassed by a flock of crows. The eagle dropped the chicken and

in the process of diving to retrieve it, crashed into a fork of a small maple tree and got himself wedged in pretty solidly.

The racket caused by the crows attracted the attention of some park visitors who came and got us to assess the situation. He was certainly jammed in and upside down to boot. I called in a Conservation Officer for consultation and also called upon the services of Butchart Gardens' arborist staff.

The decision was made that the chief arborist would climb the tree and wrap a piece of canvas around the bird to secure him and we would lower the bird to the ground by rope after the arborist cut the limb off of the tree. IT WORKED!

The bird was taken to a vet for examination and found to be okay. It was released back into the wild the same day. It was a good day for all concerned, thanks to the quick action and cooperation of BC Parks and Conservation Services staff, and the staff of an internationally known business. □



Lowering the eagle to the ground.

Churn Creek Bank Stabilization

by Steve Mazur, Cariboo District



Churn Creek Protected Area.

The Churn Creek Bank Stabilization project's objective was to stabilize a historic road cut that was eroding and exposing an ancient native burial ground. The site is partly on public roadway and partly within the Churn Creek Protected Area.

First Nations in the area (Esket and Canoe Creek, Shuswap); (Stone and Toosey, Chilcotin National Government and Carrier Chilcotin) have long disputed the "ownership" of the Churn Creek area. Canoe Creek Band is in the Cariboo Tribal Council Treaty process and this issue (exposed bones of their ancestors) was an irritant to treaty negotiations.

BC Parks, Cariboo District has been building, over time, solid working relationships with all of the above First Nations and a fair part of the success of this project is due to the levels of trust previously established. Ministry of Transportation

and Highways Cariboo District staff, worked closely with all bands on site (a vast majority of workers on site were First Nations) to complete the physical aspects of the project and have provided several letters of reference reflective of quality performance by the workers.

The sensitivity and respect with which the remains were re-interred gained many kudos from the Chiefs and Elders of all bands. No fewer than 21 "burial boxes" of artifacts and bone chip remains were professionally catalogued and re-interred.

The project (and several directly related "extras") was completed on time (by March 31, 2001) and within budgeted expenses (\$300,000).

Three members of the Project Team (Malcolm Makayev and Rod Tresierra from the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, and Herb Carter of BC Parks) were nominated for Public Service Excellence Awards in the Short Term Project category. At the June 14 ceremony in Prince George they received the Gold Award in their category. (See *Herb Carter Wins Gold Award.*)

Many thanks as well go to Judy Birch, Aboriginal Relations, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks for her dogged determination in assisting in the acquisition of resources (\$150,000) through the Interim Measures Fund to help bring this project to fruition. □

Herb Carter Wins Gold Award

by Kate Alexander, Cariboo District

The summer of 2000 was rainy at Churn Creek, as it was throughout BC. As the silt and gravel of a road cut became eroded, ancient bones started appearing. These were human bones, some of them 4000 years old. The area is a traditional meeting and trading place for several First Nations; Churn Creek Protected Area has many other cultural heritage sites.

The solution? To stabilize the bank, which was over 100 metres long and five metres tall, and to catalogue and then re-bury the bones on site. Four First Nations communities, two Ministries and archaeologists managed to coordinate the entire project, in a non-political, cooperative manner.

After several months of planning, looking for funds (the estimate was \$300,000), and negotiating, the field-work was carried out in February and March this year, on time and under budget. Each of the First Nations had an elder on site, and

they provided equipment operators and labourers. (Highways staff were very impressed by the professional performance of these workers and provided letters of reference.) Celebrations before and after the work reinforced a feeling of respect and awe for the historical significance of the project.



Herb Carter, South Chilcotin Area Supervisor

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"It was really satisfying how well the different communities worked together," said Herb Carter, South Chilcotin Area Supervisor.

Herb, as well as Malcolm Makayev and Rod Tresierra of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, recently received Gold Awards in the Short Term Project

category of the Public Service Excellence Awards. Herb has a long history of working closely with First Nations Bands at Churn Creek and in Ts'yl-os Park, and these positive relationships smoothed the way for the project.

Congratulations, Herb, and may this summer be a dry one! □

Old Trail – New Look

by Greg Betz, Okanagan District

Out with the old and in with the new self-guiding interpretive trail at Okanagan Lake Park. As part of the Catalogue of Opportunities program the Peachland Rotary Club donated the funds to sponsor this project. The project involved coordinating the knowledge and insights of our park interpreter and a great work ethic from our local environment youth team members.

Quotes from the members include: "I enjoyed building something I know others can appreciate"; "learning about the native plants was a memorable experience"; and, "I enjoyed seeing the end result of all our hard work and the compliments the campers gave us".

The trail that joins the north and south campgrounds was once a highway that was built in 1912 which connected Peachland and Summerland. This was replaced in 1930 with another highway located away from the lakeshore. This eliminated the problem of frequent landslides and dangerous hairpin turns associated with the original highway. In 1975 a major landslide occurred along this trail as over 30,000 cubic metres of silt and 60 metres of road slid into the lake.

The original self-guiding trail had several stops that suffered the same fate: several locations along the trail were subject to minor landslides that partially buried many of the trail signs. The original metal signposts are still visible in certain locations and are a story unto themselves. The new trail takes advantage of the upland area and ravine as well as the trail along the lakeshore.

The Peachland Rotary Club also provided three park benches for the trail, which were also installed by the E-Team. Visitors can take a break and enjoy spectacular views of the lake

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BC Parks Helps in Search

by Jim Cuthbert, Lower Mainland District



Darryl Paquette patrolling the river's edge.

Darryl Paquette, North Fraser Area Supervisor, and Gilles Lemay, Park Ranger, recently assisted in the search for a well known Aboriginal rights advocate, Sto:lo Grand Chief Sam Douglas. Grand Chief Douglas had been checking his fishing net in the Fraser River early on May 20th when he apparently lost his balance and fell into the river.

Douglas, 60, held the title of Grand Chief in recognition of 31 years of service as Chief of the Cheam band. Ed Kelly, former BC Parks employee and cousin to Sam Douglas, asked BC Parks, on behalf of Sam's family, to help continue the search for Sam's body when the official search had been discontinued. Darryl and Gilles responded as best they could by patrolling the Fraser River by boat for two days, from Chilliwack upstream to the Agassiz-Rosedale bridge. The assistance BC Parks provided was well received by the Cheam band. The band established a temporary camp on the river bank to support the search effort which included Sto:lo and Musqueam fishers, the RCMP, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, BC Parks, search and rescue organizations from Kent/Harrison and Chilliwack, the Fraser River Guides Association and many other business and community volunteers.

Sto:lo Grand Chief Sam Douglas died at what he spent his life doing – fighting for fishing on the Fraser River. □

("Old Trail..." continued from page 5)

and Okanagan Mountain Park.

Okanagan Lake Provincial Park was established in 1955 with the primary focus of the park being recreation. The park is also rich in the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The intent of the trail is to identify and explore these values. We also have invaders (noxious weeds) that threaten this endangered ecosystem. The trail information is developed to be thought-provoking and it is our hope and expectation that these short messages will stimulate a curiosity that will be further explained by the park interpreter when presenting visitor programs in the park.

This new community partnership project was a direct result of the Okanagan District's Catalogue of Opportunities program. All the participants are winners with the overall winners being the people who have the opportunity to visit Okanagan Lake Provincial Park. □



One of three park benches donated by the Peachland Rotary Club provides a place to take a break and enjoy the spectacular views of Okanagan Lake and Okanagan Mountain Park.



Wayne McCrory and his bear dog, Lucy, with Chris Tunnoch, Extension Officer, Lower Mainland District.

Spring Training Focus on Bears

by Jim Cuthbert, Lower Mainland District

In mid-May 2001, Lower Mainland District Recreation Officer George Ralph, assisted by Area Supervisor Rick Jessome, coordinated a number of bear management training initiatives for permanent and seasonal BC Parks' staff.

Peter Weilandt, BC Parks' wildlife ecologist, was asked to outline and discuss the implementation of the Bear/Human Conflict Prevention Plan. George and Rick also organized Firearm Qualification training with a high proportion of students qualifying for firearm certification. Ron Harris, provincial Safety and Security Officer from Victoria, managed to qualify but, like other classmates, suffered from a sore shoulder. The firearms training involved an inter-district staff exchange with Rick Jessome travelling to the Okanagan training session and Dave Richmond driving to the Fraser Valley.

The third component of spring bear management training ushered in a new era in aversive conditioning of bears within the Lower Mainland District. A new draft policy entitled *Guidelines for the Aversive Conditioning of Bears* was reviewed. This led to the establishment of a Bear Response Team with Rick Jessome as Team Leader. The team was responsible for the advanced conditioning of all bears within the district, when conditions merit the procedure. Ranger staff not on the Bear Response Team will continue to provide non-painful conditioning such as bear bangers and screamers when appropriate.

Well known bear ecologist Wayne McCrory joined an earlier spring training session for auxiliary staff to present an illustrated talk on his bear habitat mapping project as part of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan currently in preparation. □

Alcan Renews Corporate Sponsorship

by Ken Zimmer, Skeena District

BC Parks, Skeena District, has developed an informal partnership with Alcan of Kitimat to present school programs on protected areas and conservation. Through this agreement, Alcan will provide funding of \$10,000 per year for the next three years to assist BC Parks in providing its environmental education programs to local schools in the Skeena and Bulkley Valleys.

In addition to the school programs, Alcan and BC Parks are also developing a renewed recycling program at Lakelse Lake, Kleanza Creek and Tyhee Lake provincial parks. Local area scouts, guides and sea cadets will assist BC Parks with the collection and return of aluminium cans from the above parks to recycling depots. These groups will then be allowed to keep the profits from their efforts, splitting the money at the end of each camping season. New interpretive programs at both parks will emphasize the importance of recycling as a way for all of us to reduce the size of our environmental footprint.

Through these generous donations, Alcan has shown a real commitment to the people of the region that they do care about the responsible stewardship of our resources, and are committed to giving something back to the surrounding communities.

Special thanks go to Allan Hewitson, former Manager of Public Relations (now retired – congratulations!) and Michael Schuster, current Manager of Corporate Affairs and Public Relations, for all of their help and support in getting these programs approved and funded. Thanks again! □



PHOTO: RICHARD MACEDO, NORTHERN SENTINEL

Allan Hewitson (left), Alcan, presents a cheque to Hugh Markides, Skeena District Manager, with children who will benefit from the programs.

Turtles in Cranbrook

by Mary E. Glasgow, E-Team intern, Kootenay District

For the second summer in a row Environment Youth Team crews, managed by Steele O'Neil and Associates Inc., are helping biologists study turtles in Kikomun Creek Provincial Park south of Cranbrook.

Biologist Bob Sinclair began the study 12 years ago but had to put it on hold while he returned to school to finish his doctorate. Last summer E-Team involvement made it possible for the project to continue and participants collected data on between 400 and 500 painted turtles. The study will continue this year, and on to 2002.

From June 25–July 6, twenty youths with two supervisors and the program co-ordinator counted and marked turtles, then noted their age and sex.

"Over time [tracking turtles] gives insight to the environment and the impact it has on amphibians," said Don Ewing, the E-Team legacy supervisor and Study-Project co-ordinator. "Turtles and frogs are studied as they are a window to these environmental changes and the results of global warming."

Painted Turtles are currently on the blue list of vulnerable species. The blue list is a designation the British Columbia government uses to describe animals that are not endangered or considered at-risk for being endangered, but still need to be watched.

By helping with the turtle study the E-Team participants are caring for the environment and contributing to its conservation in a direct way. They are also earning money and getting training in areas like first aid, Workplace Hazardous Material Information System and job searching. The experience and training looks great on a resume and will increase their chances of finding future employment.

"The Kikomun turtle study is a great outdoors, hands-on experience that may inspire these young men and women to adopt a career in this direction," said Ewing. "It is a fascinating, fun and educational experience for all."

Interesting Painted Turtle Facts:

- The full name is western painted turtle.
- Painted turtles are blue-listed as a vulnerable species.
- The turtles are 3-4 centimetres long as infants and grow to a size of 10–14 centimetres at maturity. The females are generally larger than the males.
- The turtles start their lives with a hearty carnivorous appetite, enjoying such delicacies as larvae, earthworms and snails. They later slide into the hippie-health craze by becoming herbivores.
- Out of the one percent of painted turtles in the wild that survive, some may live to reach their 30th birthday party.
- The gender of the turtle is heat-sensitive during the incubation period. At certain temperatures of incubation, only males hatch. If the temperature is slightly higher, females will be of the vast majority to crack out of their shells.
- Painted turtles are the most widespread turtle in North America. They are found all the way from British Columbia to Prince Edward Island and even down in Georgia and Louisiana.
- Highways are serious dangers to turtles. Hundreds are killed on roads near Cranbrook every year. □



Heather MacRae: E-Team Participant, Supervisor, Employer



by Andrew MacLeod, E-Team Communications

At 28 years old, Heather MacRae has seen several sides of the Environment Youth Team program.

"I've gone through the ranks," she said. "I started at the bottom."

Five years ago she was a participant on an E-Team work crew managed by Ecoworks in the lower mainland.

She and her crewmates built trails and maintained facilities in Mount Seymour Provincial Park.

"I didn't realize how good an experience it was until I was done and I saw how good it looked on my resume."

From her supervisor, she said, she learned construction, first aid and the value of a strong work ethic. "It also taught me that in an environmental standpoint there are lots of opportunities out there."

So she enrolled in Natural Resource Management at the University of Northern British Columbia where she completed a bachelor of science.

One summer she took a job based in Chetwynd with Mariah Recreation Management Services supervising an E-Team working in BC Parks. It was similar work to what she'd done with Ecoworks, but now she had the added responsibility of managing the crew and meeting the goals of the program.

"You're not there to tell the crew what to do," she said. "You're part of their development."

Michael Sanderson, her employer with Mariah, remembers her being a well-liked supervisor. "She was close

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(“Heather MacRae...” continued from page 8)
enough to the participants’ age that she could relate to them quite well.”

“She was full of energy,” he said. “Lots of focus. Lots of dedication. I would say she gained confidence.”

MacRae’s next experience with BC Parks was as a ranger in the Peace-Liard District, which led to the job she holds now in Fort Nelson as the gateways co-ordinator for the Northern Rockies Regional District.

“When I got this job and I knew we had to do things for outdoor recreation,” she said, “The first thing I thought of was the E-Team program.”

She applied to host a work crew and won approval to have six youth maintain trails, conduct environmental assessments and build a rest area. Becoming an E-Team employer has given her a chance to introduce young people to outdoor work and share with them some of what she gained from the program.

“It solidified for me that I wanted to be outdoors and work in the environment,” she said. It gave her first hand experience that complemented her education, helped her realize there were opportunities to work while enhancing the environment and prepared her for the job she’s happily found.

“I’d really love to stay with the regional district,” she said. “There’s so much wilderness and backcountry here that there’s a real opportunity to make a big difference.” □



Heather MacRae hiking in Summit Lake Provincial Park.

An Intern, an E-Team and a Plan

by Kristina Robbins, E-team intern, Okanagan District

Noxious weeds are a BIG challenge for conservation management in the Okanagan District. The district is made up of dry grasslands, forests, and riparian areas, all of which provide critical habitat for rare and endangered species. This habitat, however, has proven favourable to noxious weeds as well. Noxious weeds have already invaded thousands of hectares of the Okanagan’s parkland and have the potential to invade many more. The cost of controlling these weeds is growing every year!

What are noxious weeds?

Noxious weeds are plants that are legislated under the *British Columbia Weed Control Act* by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Typically these are the most harmful non-native weed species, arriving here without their natural enemies. Included under this designation are diffuse and spotted knapweed, dalmatian toadflax, hound’s-tongue, canada thistle, purple loosestrife and sulphur cinquefoil, to name a few of the worst in the Okanagan.

How do noxious weeds affect biological diversity?

Noxious weeds are extremely efficient at removing essential resources like water, light and soil nutrients. They often out-compete to the point where they displace native vegetation and form dense monoculture. They are aggressive competitors that can spread at an alarming rate and therefore quickly degrading the habitat quality and the recreational value of land, among many other things.

How are we tackling the challenge of noxious weeds?

The Okanagan District hired a Weed Intern to develop a Noxious Weed Pest Management Plan, implemented under the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks to replace Pesticide Use Permits. This plan will cover the entire district for a five-year term and is based on the principles of integrated management, which include a combination of preventative methods, mechanical control, biological control and chemical control.

E-Teams have been hired in conjunction with Katim Enterprises to inventory and mechanically control noxious weeds in our parks, ecological reserves and new protected areas. As part of a collaboration between BC Parks and the Ministry of Forests, E-Teams will be inventorying weeds using the Penticton Forest District’s weed inventory procedure. The forms are then stored electronically in an ACCESS database, called PENWEED, which was developed by the Penticton Forest District. This database is linked to spatial maps and allows weed monitoring of species diversity, population and distribution.

Using the information in the Pest Management Plan and PENWEED, Area Supervisors will be able to choose the appropriate treatment option for a specific noxious weed. Treatments may then also be entered into PENWEED and tracked to monitor effectiveness.

Furthermore, the Okanagan District participates in a number of weed committees throughout the valley, collaborative committees with representatives from all levels of government, First Nations, ranchers and conservation organizations. Through collaboration and the implementation of the Pest Management Plan, the Okanagan District is dedicated in doing its part towards the goal of long-term noxious weed control. One individual weed species is one too many! □



E-Team interns in White Lake Grasslands Protected Area.

PHOTO: KRISTINA ROBBINS

Special Places

by Rick Kool, Victoria

The focus for BC Parks over the past decade has been expanding our protected area system to what is now more than 800 protected areas encompassing more than 12% of the province. Now that most regions of the province have parks representing the range of natural environments, we now have to look at a framework for managing those protected areas.

In 1999 the members of BC's Park Legacy Panel recommended that BC Parks adopt a new way of thinking about park management. This new framework is referred to as Ecological Integrity (EI).

Essentially, ecological integrity is a way of thinking and acting that takes the ecological needs of an area as one of the primary responsibility of our agency. Ecological Integrity is a way of managing which sees maintaining the wholeness of nature in our parks as a major responsibility.

Simply put, EI helps us understand what we need to be aiming for throughout the protected area system. We will know Ecological Integrity has been achieved when:

- protected ecosystems are unimpaired by stresses from human activity
- natural ecological processes are intact and self-sustaining
- protected ecosystems evolves naturally and their capacity for self-renewal is maintained, and
- protected ecosystem's biodiversity (variety of living things) is ensured

We care for some of the world's most wonderful places, places of great beauty, of great diversity, our natural treasures. The charge to BC Parks is to care for these places forever, ensuring that this generation passes along to the next a system every bit as beautiful, every bit as diverse, every bit an undiminished treasure. □

Canadian Lakes Loon Survey

by Nicole Smith, Thompson River District



PHOTOGRAPH: © GREGORY M. NELSON

During 1999/2000 the Murtle Lake Rangers in Wells Gray Park participated in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CLLS).

At the beginning of the season the Park Rangers register the lake and receive survey report forms to complete throughout the summer. This year Murtle Lake Rangers will also be completing a loon survey and submitting their data at the end of the season.

What is the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey?

The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CLLS) administered by Bird Studies Canada has occurred since 1981. CLLS focuses on the breeding success of Common Loons. "Bird studies Canada is a non-profit research and conservation organization working to advance the understanding, appreciation and conservation of wild birds and their habitats. Bird Studies Canada strives to involve its members, volunteers and others in field studies of Canadian birds." (Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Birds Studies Canada brochure)

Why Survey Loons in Canada?

"Over the last 150 years, Common Loons have been squeezed out of their breeding areas and their numbers have declined. Nesting habitat has been destroyed and young loons are starving in fishless, acidic lakes. The daily rituals of loons are disrupted by careless people, and loons are often exposed to harmful chemicals." (Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Bird Studies Canada brochure). In many areas of Canada, including British Columbia, we do not know the severity and effects of such disturbances on regional loon breeding success.

Loon Survey Data

Bird Studies Canada has provided us with data collected over the last four years in British Columbia:

YEAR	Number of lakes	Maximum adults	Maximum pair	Maximum large young	Number of young/pair
1997	38	149	56	41	.73
1998	35	183	52	49	.94
1999	37	212	54	47	.87
2000	40	233	66	52	.79

The number of lakes surveyed in BC has remained similar for the last four years. In 1997 there were 38 water bodies surveyed and in 2000 there were 40 water bodies surveyed.

From data gathered by Murtle Lake Rangers, we found that in 1999 there were 12 adults on the lake. In 2000 the rangers recorded 52 adult loons. Being a large wilderness lake with no development or motorized boating, Murtle Lake provides excellent conditions for breeding loons.

Why should BC Parks get involved?

It's important for BC Parks to work with agencies such as Bird Studies Canada to broaden our knowledge of natural resources found within BC Parks. By becoming involved in the Loon Survey park staff at Murtle Lake have a better understanding of loons and the importance of their habitat.



Hearing and seeing loons is part of the Murtle Lake wilderness experience that campers truly appreciate and enjoy. By completing the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Rangers assist Bird Studies Canada with their loon research. Murtle Lake provides adequate loon habitat. It's interesting to know how numbers of loons fluctuate over the years on a given lake. For example if loons started to disappear from the lake it is important to know why? What factors cause such a decline? (The more data the better). Each year that Murtle Lake Rangers survey the lake we gain more knowledge about numbers of loons and whether or not their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Piscivorous waterbirds such as loons are valuable indicator species; i.e., if loon numbers suddenly decline, it indicates there may be a problem with the lake, such as fish decline. If water becomes polluted from acid rain fish numbers may decline. In Western Canada, acid rain emissions from sour gas operations are a concern!

Interested in Loons?

I would encourage any interested individuals or groups who are either working or living on lakes that where loons occur to become involved with the Loon Survey. For more information about the Survey contact:

Canadian Lakes Loon Survey,
Bird Studies Canada
PO Box 160
Port Rowan, ON
N0E 1M0
www.bsc-eoc.org/cllsmain.html
Toll-free phone 1-888-448-2473

If you would like to participate in the CLLS, or support it as a contributing donor, send your name and address and the \$25.00 (tax creditable) registration fee to Kathy Jones at the above address. □

Thank you to Kathy Jones (Aquatic Surveys Officer) and Steve Timmermans (Aquatic Survey Scientist) of Bird Studies Canada for their assistance with the article.

Camp Green, CANADA!

The Camp Green, CANADA! British Columbia campaign will create awareness among the British Columbia camping and RV public concerning the use of biological, rather than chemical, products to treat RV effluent and control offensive odour.

The Camp Green, CANADA! campaign in British Columbia is being led by the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association (BCLCA) with fellow partners Environment Canada, Public Health Branch – Ministry of Health Services, Pollution Prevention Section and BC Parks – Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Parks Canada, Oceans Blue Foundation and the Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia.

The goal of the Camp Green, CANADA! British Columbia campaign is to reduce the use of toxic chemical substances in the on-board treatment of RV liquid wastes and prevent their leaching into groundwater systems. Some of the chemicals that are being targeted include formaldehyde and ammonia. Environment Canada and Health Canada have proposed recommending that both formaldehyde and ammonia be declared toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*.

Posters have been distributed to both private and public campgrounds this summer to promote the Camp Green, CANADA! campaign and to advise campers to purchase treatments endorsed by the Environment Canada's eco labeling program called "Environmental Choice".

More information on the safe biological choices to use is available at www.environmentalchoice.com under cleaning products. □

**RVers... what goes in,
must come out.**

Please use biological odour control products in your holding tank.

Did you know...
that odour control chemicals routinely used in RV holding tanks are potentially toxic and can harm the campgrounds sewage treatment system?

Did you know...
that both Environment Canada and Health Canada have proposed to recommend that formaldehyde and ammonia (common RV wastewater treatment chemicals) be declared toxic under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

Did you know...
that there are now cost effective, biological treatments for your holding tank which are not harmful to the environment or your health?

You can help by...
using biological odour control products with this EcoLogo.

To find a supplier in your area, please call 1-800-478-0399 or visit the Environmental Choice website at www.environmentalchoice.com

We care about our environment.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia
BRITISH COLUMBIA
British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association
Environment Canada
Environment Canada

For more information contact:

Joss Penny, BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association: 1-888-923-4678;

E-mail jpenny@bclca.com

or

Marie-Claude Gilbert, Environment Canada: 604-666-3487;

E-mail Marie-Claude.Gilbert@ec.gc.ca