

National Backcountry Safety Day

by Ida Cale, Kootenay District

A very important legacy of the Kokanee Glacier Alpine Campaign was the declaration by parliament that the first Saturday in September each year will be recognized as National Backcountry Safety Day.

The first event celebrating Backcountry Safety Day was a Kokanee Glacier Campaign fundraiser held in Stanley Park on September 8, 2001. Festivities of the "Great Outdoor Musicfest" included a Vendor Village with organizations like the Mountain Safety Program sharing their important safety messages, and entertainers - including *Great Big Sea* - sharing their musical talents with 2,700 participants. Nancy Greene Raine, Athlete of the Century, emceed the huge outdoor equipment auction and raised over \$10,000 for the campaign.

Hans Gmoser, founder of Canadian Mountain Holidays, was awarded the Mark Kingsbury Backcountry Safety Award by Justin Trudeau and Michel Beaudry, backcountry journalist. Han's son, Conrad, accepted the award with Marion Kingsbury, Mark's widow, in attendance.

Acknowledgement of the celebration was received from Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. The challenge for Canadians and British Columbians now is to ensure the legacy continues. What will be the future celebrations of National Backcountry Safety Day? □



Nancy Greene Raine and Justin Trudeau emcee at the National Backcountry Safety Day Celebration.

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Who is this man

and why is he so happy?

Stay tuned for more information in February's VISIONS.



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"Great Big Sea" roistered the crowd of 2,700 in Vancouver's Stanley Park.

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Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is January 4, 2002.

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(“...Backcountry Safety...” continued from page 1)

Letter from Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada

I send my warmest greetings to the organizers of Canada's first Backcountry Safety Day, an event which will raise national awareness on the safety issues pertaining to avalanches.

Canada's grand expanses and pristine landscapes appeal to the imagination of nature lovers from all over the world, and British Columbia's majestic peaks attract many backcountry enthusiasts. Such grandeur, however, needs to be respected, whether for its fauna, its flora or for its most formidable phenomenon, the avalanche.

Backcountry Safety Day is the grand finale of the Kokanee Glacier Alpine Campaign, a national campaign in memory of Michel Trudeau and other Canadians who have lost their lives while pursuing their passion for the backcountry. The avalanche education programs funded through this campaign are essential in promoting the message that there are precautions to take to avoid unnecessary perils.

I applaud all those whose efforts helped create Backcountry Safety Day and encourage all backcountry adventurers to recognize the importance of adopting the necessary safety measures when venturing off the beaten track. To all of you attending tonight's event, I send my best wishes for a successful evening.

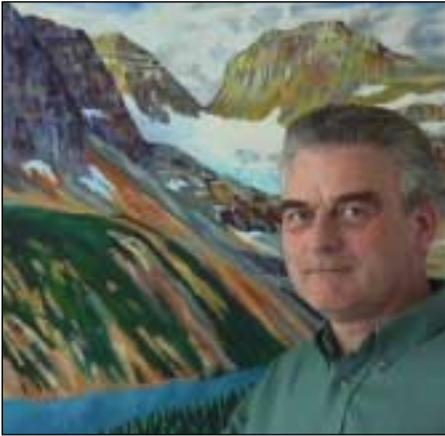
*Adrienne Clarkson
September 2001*

New Web Address!

Please note that the website addresses for the Ministry and BC Parks have changed. The new Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protections' website URL is now: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca>

and BC Parks' new website URL is: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>

The old website addresses will automatically forward you to these new sites; however, please change your web browser bookmarks to these new URLs. □



Farewell to Roger Norrish

A special farewell to Roger Norrish who retired from BC Parks Headquarters this September. Roger was a great contributor to *VISIONS* newsletter, particularly his regular submission of *Name the Protected Area*.

Roger started with BC Parks in 1965 as a Youth Crew foreman at Champion Lakes Park in the West Kootenay and soon worked his way up to Systems Park Planner in Victoria. In 1974, he moved to Smithers and worked as the Regional Manager for the new Skeena Region. He returned to Victoria in 1980 to work as Land Use Assessment Officer in Outdoor Recreation Division and then in 1987, until his retirement this year, he worked as Management Planning Coordinator for Planning Services in BC Parks, Victoria. His dedication to the parks planning process was unending and reflected his appreciation and understanding of protected areas management, planning and operations.

Roger's musical talent was well-known and he could always be counted on to sing and play guitar at most BC Parks' Headquarter staff functions.

Thanks Roger, for your endless supply of great photos, *VISIONS* articles, songs and your enormous contribution to BC Parks throughout your career. □

GETPARC Trail Update

by Ron Paley, Trail Master for GETPARC

GETPARC (Golden Ears Trails Preservation and Restoration Club) is a registered volunteer, non-profit, charitable society helping BC Parks preserve and restore the extensive trail network in Golden Ears Park.

By bringing representatives from trail users together collectively, GETPARC serves as a consensus-forming body to facilitate trail upgrading, resolve potential conflicts between user groups and make recommendations to BC Parks that reflect those consensus positions. GETPARC also raises money to be used in restoring and preserving the extensive trail system. Funds raised are spent on priority projects in cooperation with BC Parks. We are currently raising \$20,000 to \$25,000 to replace the Emergency Shelter on Golden Ears Mountain.

In May 2001 volunteers from the Ridge Meadows Outdoors Club, the Lama Association and Ron Gellner, Senior Ranger with Golden Ears Park, upgraded the Allouette Mountain Incline Trail and the Mike Lake Trail. The work involved repairing swales and filling in washed-out areas as well as clearing back overgrown bushes, such as salmonberries, and branches that were encroaching the trails. What was remarkable was little or no garbage was found – all users are taking pride in our park. We are out in all weather conditions repairing areas where water is collecting. Such a simple thing to do, but the damage it prevents is remarkable. We just finished taking down all the flagging near Lake Beautiful on Allouette Mountain. This two-kilometre section was closed this last year and re-routed.

Volunteers really make a difference and should feel proud of what they do. If we all take a part in preserving our park, it will be there for future generations to enjoy. □



▲ GETPARC in action!



◀ Marie Seabrook, president of GETPARC, assists visitors in Golden Ears Provincial Park.

E-Team Interns Promote BC Parks

by Andrew MacLeod, E-Team Communications

When Linda Irving, 24, delivered her resume to the Fraser-Fort George Museum in Prince George, her timing was lucky – the museum was preparing to hire two Environment Youth Team interns.

“I was looking for a job and I applied at the museum without knowing this job had been posted.”

The museum had funding for two young people to visit classrooms and talk about BC Parks, the protected area strategy and its role in conservation. For Irving, who is part-way through a geography degree and has college education in parks, forest recreation and eco-tourism management, the job is a super fit.

Her partner for the presentations is Candy Keene, 20, who grew up in Prince George and is working on a psychology degree, a discipline Irving says gives Keene a great perspective on classroom dynamics.

“We’ve been working out how we’re going to handle the classroom and the program,” says Irving.

As a team they visit schools and make interactive, activity-based presentations aimed at getting young people to think about how land-use decisions are made and why some areas are protected. They also discuss the increasing importance of conservation in BC Parks.

This is the fifth year E-Team interns at the museum have delivered school programs about BC Parks. Teachers are eager to book them, says Irving, and the pair has numerous bookings for January, February and March.

Irving is taking a break from university to work and think about her career and life choices. During the summer she worked in Abbotsford for Turtle Island Earth Stewards, and started at the museum at the end of October.

“I’m trying to make sure I’m pursuing the right degree, and I want to see what’s out there in the working world.”

“A lot of people I’ve met in the environmental field in British Columbia began on an E-Team,” says Irving. □



Linda Irving and Candy Keene visit classrooms and talk about BC Parks, the protected area strategy and its role in conservation.

Mitlenatch Island Host Program

by Valerie Gregor and Andy Smith, Strathcona District

Volunteers are a valuable asset to BC Parks and often assist in the management and protection of park values. People from all walks of life donate their time to preserving the ecological integrity of British Columbia’s protected areas and in some cases, like Mitlenatch Island, help provide viewing opportunities to the public which may otherwise be restricted.

Mitlenatch Island Marine Host program has a long history with the Strathcona District. Volunteers have been coming back year after year to help protect the island’s sensitive ecosystem and bird sanctuary. Mitlenatch Island, located in the Strait of Georgia near Campbell River, has a unique ecosystem primarily due to its location within a rain shadow of Vancouver Island, thereby limiting rainfall. Mitlenatch Island is an important nesting ground for several species of birds and is the largest colony in the area. The island is also surrounded by an abundance of marine life, making it a popular tourist attraction.

Volunteers rotate weekly and many have been returning for over five years while some make this their second home, coming back for over 12 years. The consistency of volunteers makes the program more efficient, learning more about the sensitive natural history while becoming more attuned to what the visiting public wishes to know and see.

With lodgings that would make Robinson Crusoe’s dwellings appear luxurious, the volunteers contend with mice scuttling over their beds and bodies at night and constantly

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("Mitlenatch..." continued from page 4) jumping out of the way of one of the largest garter snake species in British Columbia. The only contact they have with the outside world is through a cell phone. After dark the hosts are the only people on the island as it is restricted to day-use only. They protect the nesting bird areas through the dissemination of information and their presence helps to keep visitors at bay and therefore attributes to the increase of shellfish as well. The volunteers also provide simple maintenance to the basic park

facilities and island signage while some donate equipment and supplies for the long term benefit of the program. Stranded boaters have also benefited from the volunteer hosts when the weather has turned bad or their boats are damaged. Without the volunteer hosts, the cost and ability to protect this sensitive island may have been too restrictive and forced closure to the general public. The Strathcona District applauds all the dedicated volunteers who have willingly donated their time to this program. □

New Professionals for a New Public Service

by Tracy Ronmark, Cariboo District

It is a fact that in the British Columbia public service the average age of employees is 43, and for managers the average age is 50. Within the next five years, 35 percent of the approximately 40,000 public service employees will be eligible for retirement (PSERC Commissioner, Vince Collins, pers. comm.). Even with the "new era" of budget cuts and fiscal constraints, and given the changing demographic of the labour market, the public service is facing a challenge of recruiting and retaining educated, skilled and talented staff for the future.

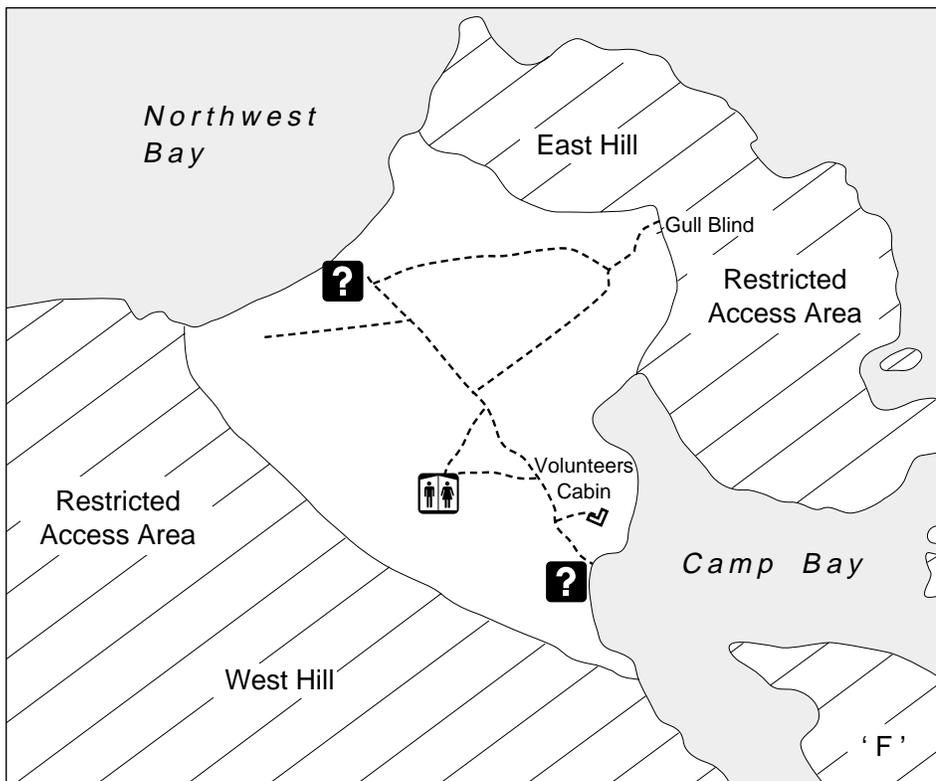
These facts have not gone unnoticed by the government. In early October, I was nominated to attend "The New Professionals Forum" in Victoria, presented by the Institute of Public Administration in Canada (IPAC, Victoria Regional Group) and PSERC (Public Service Employee Relations Council). The conference was attended by 70-plus "new" public servants from a variety of ministries and other levels of government as well as students of the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria.

The purpose of the forum was to have new professionals meet and share views, ideas and experiences on the key human resource issues around organizational development and renewal. We talked about what attracts us to the public service, what would keep us in the public service and, also, what are some of our frustrations as new employees within our organizations. We developed recommendations and action plans around these topics for PSERC and the conference report should be made available soon.

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Mitlenatch Provincial Park



(“New Professionals...” continued from page 5)

This idea of renewing the public service is not just a West Coast phenomenon. In fact, the provincial forum was born from a national initiative. From the forum, five participants were selected (yes, they picked me!) to attend a conference held in Toronto called “New Professionals Driving a New Public Service” organized by the Institute of Public Administration in Canada. This two-day event included over 300 delegates from various levels of government, new and experienced, from Newfoundland to Nunavut to British Columbia.

During the course of the event we heard speakers talk about topics including: the changing idea of what working for the public service means, recruitment strategies, encouraging innovation within the corporate culture, and managing politics versus administration. We heard from a variety of panelists including Andromache Karakatsanis, Secretary of Cabinet for the Government of Ontario; Evert Lindquist, Director of the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria; David Omilgoitok, Deputy Minister of Human Resources, Government of Nunavut; Mel Cappe, Clerk of the Privy Council, Government of Canada; as well as professors, innovators and most importantly, new professionals. There were question periods, working groups and time for networking.

All in all it was an incredible opportunity to meet and share ideas with professionals with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. The national conference report promises to share some interesting and innovative direction for the future of the public service. Also, by the time this article is published, our delegation will have compiled a report on the key issues and ideas to be considered by PSERC and the rest of the government of British Columbia. On behalf the rest of the delegation, I would like to thank PSERC and our home ministries for the support to attend both conferences. I hope and expect that this is a positive step in renewing and maintaining our vital public service.

Check out these websites for further information:

- Institute of Public Administration in Canada: www.ipaciapc.ca
- New Professionals Conference: www.newpublicservice.ca □



Closing the continental gap: the British Columbia delegation “networks” with new public servants from Manitoba, Ottawa and Newfoundland.



Have You Seen This Plant?

by Wade Calder, South Vancouver Island District

Drumbeg Park on Gabriola Island is home for a particularly nasty noxious weed: giant cow parsnip (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Giant cow parsnip, commonly known as giant hogweed, is a member of the carrot family. Giant hogweed resembles the cow parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*), native to the Pacific Northwest in that the leaf and flower are similar. The main difference is in scale: cow parsnip seldom exceeds four feet and giant hogweed can grow to 15 feet in height and four inches in stem diameter.

Contact with giant hogweed can cause acute phototoxicity. The poison is a photosensitizer – a mixture of chemicals, which work indirectly, sensitizing the skin to sunlight. A combination of exposure to the sap and sun produces painful burning blisters that may develop into permanent purplish or blackened scars.

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("Have You Seen..." continued from page 6)

Eye contact with the sap may cause temporary or even permanent blindness.

Children are very susceptible victims of hogweed. Its "jungle-like" appearance looks like a great adventure opportunity. Playful contact with the stand in Drumbeg Park has produced several injuries and one child was hospitalized for three days. The attending dermatologist also reported cases

involving giant hogweed in Victoria.

Giant hogweed is native to the Ural Mountains in the former Soviet Union, but now has a world-wide distribution, including Australia, United Kingdom, United States and Canada. The plants do particularly well in damp areas or along riverbanks where rich soils, combined with a good supply of groundwater, provide ideal conditions.

The affected area of Drumbeg Park is closed, and notices are posted

alerting the public to the potential hazard. This is a very difficult plant to eradicate and various methods are being tried in other countries. Presently we are developing an integrated weed management plan to eradicate this introduced species from Drumbeg Park. We'll report our success in a future *VISIONS* article; until then, be on the alert for this alluring – but dangerous – visitor. □

Fintry Heritage Plan

by A.J. Downie, E-Team Intern, Okanagan District

The "Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society" is a group that is full of energy and enthusiasm. Its 100-plus members are definitely ready to get going on the restoration and interpretation of many heritage features in the park. With our Heritage Development Plan for the park nearing completion, we intend to provide them with more than enough projects to keep them busy for a good long time!

Fintry Provincial Park is located on the west side of Okanagan Lake, on the site of the early 1900s Fintry estate. The park still contains many rare and unique features from this estate. These include the manor house made of quarried stones, an octagonal dairy barn (the last of its kind in western Canada), other farm buildings, and a packing house on Okanagan Lake. Two years ago, the Friends of Fintry was established as a non-profit society to fundraise and to participate in capital improvements, management and operation of Fintry Park. Last year the group received a Canada millennium grant to begin its restoration activities; and, with the help of BC Parks, four of the farm buildings will soon have a new roof, and the octagonal barn will have new windows and a beautiful paint job!



Fintry's farm buildings, including the octagonal dairy barn with its new roof and skylights.

For the past month and a half, I have been working on a Heritage Development Plan for Fintry Provincial Park. My project started with a BC Parks/Friends of Fintry three-day heritage tour of various successfully operating heritage sites around the region. It was definitely an informative and worthwhile trip. Through guided tours and conversations with the operators of other sites, we learned first hand what works and what doesn't work when it comes to heritage interpretation. Many of the sites have come a long way with few resources, and it was great to see that when you have the right people in the right places, amazing things can happen!

When it's finished, the Heritage Development Plan will provide guidance and direction to the Friends of Fintry, and it should act as a work plan for the group. Because both BC Parks and the Friends of Fintry have been involved throughout the process, the final product will represent the agreement and approval of both parties to begin numerous heritage development activities. In addition to laying out the management and operating principles that will be applied at Fintry, the plan clarifies the roles of the two parties involved. It describes the themes around which restoration and interpretation activities will be based, and it sets some initial priorities by identifying objectives and actions to pursue.

We're extremely fortunate to be working with such an enthusiastic group, and I'm confident that once the final plan is passed over to them, things will start happening and the changes will be visible. If you have any information or ideas you'd like to share with us for the development plan, we'd like to hear them. You'll have to stop by in a year or two, so you can see for yourself what happens when you put your friends to work! □

Don't Get Caught under the Mistletoe

by Colleen Millar and Seth Taylor, South Vancouver Island District



Dwarf Mistletoe lives primarily on its host's branches and feeds with a modified root system.

A trip to Carmanah Walbran Provincial Park on Vancouver Island will bring visitors into some of the finest remaining old-growth forest in the Pacific Northwest. The hemlock dwarf mistletoe is a noticeable feature in Carmanah Walbran, and often generates questions from park visitors.

The hemlock dwarf mistletoe is a small, parasitic plant that carries out its life cycle predominantly on western hemlock. Dwarf mistletoe lives primarily on its host's branches and feeds with a modified root system, which takes up water and nutrients.

The parasite stimulates a visible swelling and growth in the tree's branch. This abnormal growth is often called witches' broom or broom. These brooms can weigh over one hundred pounds, and can become a hazard. As a result of this infestation, the parasite robs the tree of nutrients needed for its own growth and integrity. The degree of infection determines the health and longevity of the tree.

The only visible portion of dwarf mistletoe is the reproductive plant found in the canopy of infected trees. This small plant produces a berry, which normally contains one seed. When ripe, the seed is expelled from the berry due to hydrostatic pressure. The seeds land on surrounding foliage up to 15 metres away and the cycle is reborn.

Although this parasitic plant causes tree mortality and effects plant vigor, dwarf mistletoe has its rightful place in maintaining ecological integrity in the coastal western hemlock zone. The noticeable disfigurement caused by dwarf mistletoe provides valuable habitat for birds and mammals. In addition, park visitors are introduced to a parasitic relationship that continues to influence the landscape. Next time you visit Carmanah Walbran be sure to stop and admire this parasite at work, just don't get caught under the mistletoe. □

Reference:

Hennon, P.E.; Beatty, J.S.; Hildebrand, D. 2001. Hemlock Dwarf Mistletoe. USDA Forest Service, Forest Insect and Disease Leaflet 135. January 2001, 8 pages.



Hemlock dwarf mistletoe is a small parasitic plant that carries out its life cycle predominantly on western hemlock.

**Not to be
confused with
what we like
to stand under
at Christmas!**



A Monster at Alice Lake?!

by Marlene Graham, Park Host and Volunteer Coordinator, Lower Mainland District

Spring has to be the most wonderful time to host at Alice Lake Provincial Park, just north of Squamish. Alice Lake is a small tranquil lake nestled in the forested hills that are in the shadow of the majestic extinct volcano, Mount Garibaldi. It's a time when nature replenishes itself and the park is alive with sights and sounds of birds and wildlife. One of the biggest treats is keeping a distant eye on the local heron colony, which is unbelievably close to the park's main day-use area. Herons are known for keeping their colonies in remote locations, so to have one within a couple of hundred feet of the day-use area and the host's campsite is a rare occurrence indeed.

Spring is also a time when the Park Facility Officers (PFOs) only work until 1:00am; after that, the hosts are on their own. This has never been a problem...until...one night at 2:00am. A camper, a man, was frantically pounding on my door. My head said, "Marlene, you are all alone, don't answer it!" I was leaning heavily on my intuition, so I grabbed my housecoat, turned on the outside light to peak out the window. I was looking straight into the face of a man who had a look of terror written all over him, so I opened the door.

He explained that he was a high school teacher from Richmond and that he and a group of students were camping just down the road. He was hearing these "sounds" and would like to know if I knew what they were. As I followed him to the front of my trailer, I could see a woman in a car parked behind my truck. He said that it was his wife, also a teacher, and she was so frightened that she refused to leave the car.

We listened. After about five minutes, a loud clacking sound started. I recognized the sounds and I piped up saying, "Oh, those are the

herons, they must be really upset to be making all the noise at this time of the night!" But he told me to wait as the sound changed. Well, no sooner than he said that, the sound did change and I couldn't believe my ears. It was so loud that the campground almost shook! I am a naturalist by trade so I know the sound of a bear or a cougar. It was not a roar, or a scream, or a howl or a bawl, it was a "WHOAAA" and it was loud. It was crazy but the only thing that came to mind was a huge Godzilla, a monster, ...a Sasquatch – not totally unreasonable since we were in Sasquatch country!

With ten years of hosting and five years of coordinating, I thought I knew all the answers, but this one truly stumped me and I knew I needed help. Have you ever needed something fast and just couldn't find it? Well, that is what happened with the PFO Manager's emergency phone number – I couldn't find it anywhere. All that was left was to phone the local detachment of the RCMP.

I knew this was going to be the most difficult phone call in my life, trying to explain why I needed them, gently using the word "monster". My only saving grace was that an ex-ranger, Paul, who I worked with for five years at Cultus Lake Provincial Park was now a member stationed at Squamish. I dropped his name hoping that it would give me credibility. It did! Before I could count to 20 there were three police cars rushing into the park. One went straight to the day-use area and the other two came to me in the campground.

The "monster" sound was coming quite regularly now with a break of five to ten minutes between each bout. I had the two members turn off their vehicles and listen. We didn't have to wait long before all that clicking and clacking started. I

warned them that the sound would change and that there was something really upsetting the herons. Then it happened! The first words out of the female member's mouth were "What was that?" She instantly moved back to her vehicle and unbolted her rifle. Over their radio I heard the dispatchers asking them if they needed a CO. The dispatcher had explained to the members that she had also heard these "noises" last year when she was camping at Alice Lake.

After spending what seemed like an eternity listening to this monster sound repeat itself, I asked the two members if they would like me to take them down the trail to the day-use area where the heron nest is located. They hesitantly agreed, so off we went. I had to stop twice and wait for these young, physically-fit people to catch up to me. By the time we got to the bottom of the trail, the "sound" didn't quite sound like a monster anymore, it sounded more like a pig screaming as it was being ripped apart by a predator.

Once at the day-use area, I showed them the outhouse that was 100-or-so-feet away, explaining that the heron colony was the same distance away, up and behind the outhouse on the rise of a small hill. I waited for them to head off and save the day, but they didn't move. A third member joined them and they still wouldn't go into the dark forest toward the nesting site.

The third, older member said that it must have been the herons, as the "sound" was coming from tree top level. I tried to explain to them that the tree top level at the beach area was ground level on top of the hill but they weren't buying it. They were quite happy to conclude that it was only the herons and leave the area as fast as they could. Which is exactly what they did. It was like

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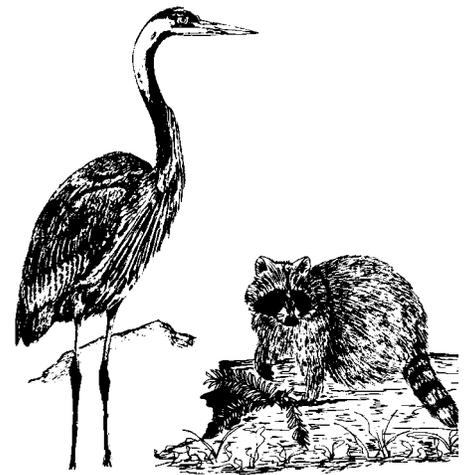
("A Monster..." continued from page 9)

magic, one minute they were there and the next, poof, they were gone!

Back in my trailer with my door closed, I could still hear this horrific sound, loudly, off and on, all night long! The next morning, I was repeating the story to a PFO, Laurel, hoping that she might have an idea what it was. The only thing that she could come up with that it might be the local raccoons as they might like to raid the herons nests. They are good tree climbers. A raccoon would probably find heron eggs delicious and a baby heron would make a nice little snack. Maybe, as the raccoons

got closer to the herons, the herons would make all this racket to get rid of them. If it didn't work, then they would let out this "horrific sound" as a last ditch effort to rid themselves of a hungry raccoon who just wouldn't give up. Now I could buy that theory a little easier than a "monster"! But no one knows for sure. It very well could have been a hungry Sasquatch!

Oh, and as a postscript to this story, there was not one camper to be found in the campground by 8:00 the next morning! All left, I'm sure, with stories to tell about the "monster" at Alice Lake. □



Monster?

Monster?



Tracy Ronmark overlooks the Carnlick Creek Valley, Ilgachuz Range, Itcha Ilgachuz Park.

Planning for the Future

by Tracy Ronmark, Cariboo District

There is a classic dilemma for young people coming out of colleges and universities. To get the job you want, you need to have experience. And to get experience, you need a job.

It is, without a doubt, a frustrating pattern. Some of us are lucky to get work-related experience through co-op positions, internships and the like. In fact, I got my foot in the

BC Parks door as an E-Team intern (remember "Learning to Manage for Ecological Integrity"?). The experience served me well, for this spring I won the competition for a unique opportunity, and here I am working as the Assistant Planner for the Cariboo District.

My position comes from the Public Service Internship Initiative Program (funded in part by PSERC) and is designed to give recent graduates of post-secondary institutions direct work experience and introduction to a career in the public service. This year it is the only position of its kind in BC Parks. The position will run for 11 months, until April 2002. Part of the benefit is that I will be granted "In Service" status at the end so I can bid on further public service postings.

As the assistant planner, I have been doing a lot of what district planners do. I started off in the spring learning the basics of management planning, system planning and sub-regional planning. I have helped out our District Planner, Chris Hamilton, in writing and preparing information material for public mail-outs and meetings, researched background information

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("Planning..." continued from page 10)

for management plans, and visited some of the protected areas and goal two proposals in this very diverse Cariboo District. Now, as I am starting to assimilate much of the process and information I am now preparing for my own management planning projects. I am looking ahead to holding my first public meeting and admittedly, I do feel both nervous and excited.

Coming to Williams Lake was a bit of a culture shock, especially having spent the last couple years in Victoria (I have been teased about the zeal with which I took in the annual stampede). Seriously though, being here in the Cariboo District challenged me in my idea of what protected areas are, and how to plan for them in the context of the larger landscape, and, of course, ecological integrity. Everyone here has been very supportive and helpful, as have those in HQ who are always fielding my phone calls and e-mails about this policy or that guideline recommendation. I'd like to thank you all, especially Chris for mentoring me thus far.

I hope that there are more opportunities for funding these types of internships in the future. As there are a significant number of staff who will be retiring over the next ten years, these types of jobs are very important for maintaining a lot of that accrued knowledge and experience within the system. □



Frog Pelts at Albas

by Bruce Petch, Thompson River District

The name "frog pelt" conjures up images of some sort of bizarre amphibian trapping scheme. Suspicion deepens when the origin of the name Albas is investigated. Albas is one of 30 separate lakeshore areas that comprise Shuswap Lake Marine Park. It is named after Al Bass, a well-known trapper who used to live nearby. In fact frog pelt is a species of leaf lichens (*Peltigera neopolydactyla*) that has nothing to do with Al Bass.

This striking plant looks like it is made of bits of black garbage bag, with tiny bright orange fingers sticking up from the edges. The strange appearance is more than skin-deep – lichens are remarkable life forms. They consist of two types of organisms: fungi and algae.

The fungus shelters the alga while the alga produces carbohydrates for the fungus (through photosynthesis). Lichens are widespread in the Interior Wet Belt where Albas is located. Autumn is a great time to look for them and also for many species of mushrooms and mosses. It is also wonderfully quiet in the fall.

There is a popular trail at Albas that leads up to a spectacular set of waterfalls. More than 15,000 people hike this trail every year and, even though its location is remote, it is a favourite destination for the thousands of people who rent houseboats every summer on Shuswap Lake.

Getting visitors to stay on the trail rather than short-cutting or exploring through the forest is a major challenge. Last fall the park facility operator found a way of fastening fence posts to bedrock so we were able to install short sections of fence in critical areas. This spring an Environmental Youth Team constructed stairs and walkways in some of the most eroded and muddy sections of the trail. And in many places the Marine Rangers moved debris to close off paths that wandered away from the main trail. As we hiked the trail for a final inspection in October, the results of everyone's work were impressive. Less obvious was the miniature world in areas that had not been disturbed. The cool, damp fall weather in a shady cedar-hemlock forest is perfect for the growth of fungi and other organisms. Moreover deciduous trees and shrubs have lost their leaves, making plants on the ground more evident. Life forms on the ground were remarkable – mushrooms of many shapes and sizes – some that

look like coral and others that are innumerable tiny elf-stools tinged with orange. Branching mosses create a green mat that in close-up view looks like a tiny dense forest. And, of course, here and there you can catch a glimpse of lichens that resemble the booty of a frog trapper. □



Frog pelt lichens.



Rangers on Patrol. From left to right: Gord MacRae (Area Supervisor), Tinha Chambers and Michael Jim (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation Band Members as well as Park Rangers).

Hike-with-a-Ranger Program

by Michael F. Jim, Skeena District

The Hike-with-a-Ranger program had another eventful summer season, providing an introduction to Tatshenshini to young, inquiring minds. The program was developed to give young people a chance to learn about the Tatshenshini-Elsek Park. This opportunity introduces youth to this special place, its unique heritage – both physical and cultural.

This park is located in northwestern British Columbia and, with several different overlapping biomes, provides an unusual biological diversity. There are many species of animals and plants that are rare or unusual in British Columbia and the Yukon: peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons, glacier bears, northern coral root in the orchid family and Arctic cinquefoil in the rose family. Also, it is the only park in the province that has an entire eco-region contained within it, the Icefield Range Eco-region. To ensure that the land and the resources are available for future generations, they need to be protected and preserved with the help

of educational programs. Topics such as co-management between BC Parks and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN); conservation attributes of the Tatshenshini and Elsek Rivers; wildlife, recreational and tourism attractions; roles in the management of park ranger responsibilities; and ultimate goals are discussed with the youth.

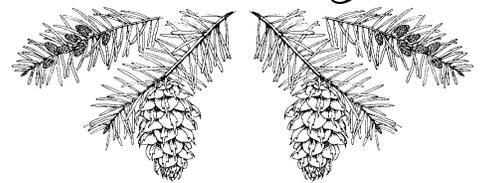
The walk was moderate to all who attended; it was a first for a few and refreshing for others. The group hikes began with an interpretive walk, and ended by cooling off in the snow. The groups appreciate having the hike end high on a mountainside to enjoy the views, sliding or playing in the snow, always under the watchful eye of a park ranger, ensuring their safety.

As a park ranger, I would like to see hiking trips that allow people to learn about, value and respect the physical and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of the area that they are visiting. Most people are

looking for adventure, an experience of a lifetime, that will linger in their memory long after they return home.

The Hike-with-a-Ranger program is a great way of highlighting the natural wilderness and heritage values of the park by recognizing the users and providing enjoyment to all people to this special place. Being within CAFN traditional territory, it will give everyone the chance to experience the Tatshenshini's wilderness first hand. □

Season's Greetings



from BC Parks