

Prescribed Burns at Junction Sheep Range Park

by Kate Alexander, Cariboo District

Fire has returned to Junction Sheep Range Park!

Fire is a natural process in grasslands, but over the last few decades fires have usually been suppressed, leading to encroachment of trees onto grasslands. With forests now covering large areas that were grasslands, species that rely on grasslands, such as California bighorn sheep and sharp-tailed grouse, are feeling the squeeze of habitat loss.

To mimic natural wildfires, BC Parks has been planning a controlled or "prescribed" burn for the past year. With help from the Ministry of Forests' Cariboo Fire Centre, the first stage went off with barely a hitch on April 4, 2001. The weather was perfect – dry and sunny, light winds, with rain forecast for the next day. Workers with drip torches walked the two parallel roads in the park, lighting up the grasslands between them. Starting the burn near the road creates a break in order to prevent fire from jumping the road, should the wind come up.

Did the fire kill the encroaching Douglas fir trees? Many of them. The youngest trees were incinerated, but unfortunately some of the two-to three-foot "Christmas trees" withstood the heat. The grasses burned easily. The ash from the burn created a surge of extra nutrients – so only three weeks later the burned areas were a vivid golf course green.

The first burn also created a fire-break, or buffer, for the next stage: burning the lower northeast facing slopes where forest encroachment is worse.



GLEN DAVIDSON PHOTO

Grass and small encroaching trees (up to 50 centimetres diameter) were the target of the prescribed burns.



GLEN DAVIDSON PHOTO

Phil Ranson of the Cariboo Fire Centre igniting the first fire.

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- send an email note to ParkInfo@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca
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Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is July 1, 2001.

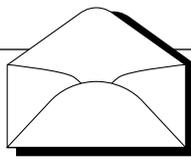
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Letters

Email sent: Wednesday, April 18, 2001 8:51 AM
To: ParkInfo PRK [BC Parks Website email address]
Subject: Article in VISIONS

I hope this note finds it's way to the Editor Nancy Chave and Rick Kool in Victoria.

*I was a Park Host a couple of summers ago, so now receive the newsletter VISIONS. This April edition had a really good article in it called, **What are Protected Areas Worth?** by Rick Kool. I want to commend Rick for writing a great article and bringing a very important point out in the open (too bad more people don't receive this newsletter). If people thought of our green areas and our blue areas as providing a valuable service, we wouldn't be so ready to exploit them. They are the same as essential services, like police and firemen, that a community must have to function. And I repeat MUST have!*

Our world has become so stressful that we have to have places where we can go to de-stress, or more importantly, places to go where our bodies can get cleaner air to breath, which they need desperately to function. Of course these bodies have to have access to clean drinking water. I strongly believe that if our air, water, soil, and food weren't so badly contaminated with industrial waste and synthetic chemicals then our health care system wouldn't be under the stress it is. Because we aren't respecting the wonderful services that nature provides we have to have this huge, expensive, ever-expanding, infrastructure to handle the fallout.

And I could go on from here and say that, because we don't respect the basic natural world (air, water and soil), we also don't respect the animal and Homo sapiens aspect of the natural world. So, I believe this is why we have drive-by shootings, motor vehicle speeding accidents, rape, spousal abuse, home invasions, B and Es, theft, school yard bullying, bombing of buildings, selling of animal parts, selling of children and babies, and humans who are hiding in cargo ships or containers, even graffiti and noise pollution, because it is all about RESPECT. Respect of humans, animals, and community. Acknowledge and respect the services that nature supplies. Build an infrastructure, system, economy, government that respects the basic services that nature supplies and then an education system that includes this respect of nature and we will have a country with drastically reduced crimes against humans, animals, and property.

Boy, I guess I really got going on that one. But again, thanks Rick for producing, and VISIONS for publishing, a very well written article and I'm so glad people like you are working for BC Parks. It sounds like BC Park's Ecological Integrity program is a big plus too. Keep up the great work.

Teres Cahill
Photographic Artist
Surrey, B.C.

What are Protected Areas Worth?

by Rick Kool, Victoria

We are always putting a dollar value on nature. We might say that a hectare of forest is worth so many dollars in standing wood, or a given body of water might produce so much value in fish harvested. We have calculated the value of nature as a tourist attraction: in BC studies indicated provincial parks are said to

do we have some of the best drinking water in the world? Because we have intact forests that purify our water. Why, with all of our rain, don't we have more flooding? Because we have swamps, marshes and wetlands to absorb water. Why does soil remain on our mountain sides? Because the plants hold the soil together, anchoring it to the slopes

recreation and education, a carbon sink, a place for air purification ... The economists calculate that the average value of the world's ecosystems in terms of their services, per hectare, is around \$1100!. This ranges in value from estuaries, sea grass beds and swamps/marshes that are worth more than \$40,000 per hectare,

("Prescribed Burns..." continued from page 1)

Last fall, workers from the local Toosey Band "manipulated the fuel" in the second stage burn area. They felled encroaching trees and piled them up where we need to increase fire intensity in order to kill large areas of in-growth and encroachment. Conversely, they removed young trees away from big, old fir "veterans", to save these trees from burning, as they provide wildlife habitat.

This second burn, two weeks later, was disappointing: grasses burned but the fire wouldn't "crown" to kill the many in-growing fir trees as was intended. Probably, the weather was too cool. Since it is now nesting season, we will wait until the fall to again attempt this burn.

A third burn was done to improve forage for California bighorn sheep. Two herds dashed for safety into the steep canyons as the surveying helicopter rattled overhead. First, Cariboo Fire Centre staff in red shirts completed a quick "back burn" to prevent the fire from spreading. Then the helicopter started igniting swaths of the benchland grasses using a giant drip torch hanging from cables beneath its belly. The fire spread until it met the back burn where the fuel was eliminated and then died as quickly as it had started. Two hours later, only the woody debris was still smouldering.

We will be monitoring our vegetation plots, comparing burned with unburned plots, as well as continuing with wildlife counts. These are intended to measure success in restoring the grassland habitat that the park was established to protect. If this exciting experiment seems successful, we will continue with more burns in the Junction, and possibly at Churn Creek Protected Area. □

GLENN DAVIDSON PHOTO



For burning large or inaccessible areas a helicopter is used. Note the "back burned" area on the left which is designed to limit the spread of the larger prescribed fire.

KATE ALEXANDER PHOTO



Only three weeks after the first burn vigorous new growth was obvious.

Celebrate Parks Day on July 21

Where will you be on July 21? At home or on vacation, this is a great day to celebrate Canada's Parks Day with a visit to one of British Columbia's outstanding provincial or national parks.

This annual event allows Canadians of all ages to rediscover the wonder of Canada's natural beauty. Parks and historic sites are ours to enjoy and ours to protect and Canada's Parks Day is the perfect time to become actively involved in their preservation and enhancement. Parks throughout BC and Canada are celebrating Parks Day with a variety of activities for all ages. Visitors to participating parks will enjoy nature walks, barbecues, events for kids, birdwatching and many other activities.

Parks Day events are planned at the following parks:

Cariboo:

Ten Mile Lake Provincial Park

Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast:

Alice Lake Provincial Park

Porpoise Bay Provincial Park

Porteau Cove Provincial Park

Kootenay:

Champion Lakes Provincial Park

Kikomun Creek Provincial Park

Kokanee Creek Provincial Park

Moyie Lake Provincial Park

Wasa Lake Provincial Park

Lower Mainland:

Cultus Lake Provincial Park

Golden Ears Provincial Park

Rolley Lake Provincial Park

Sasquatch Provincial Park

Skagit Valley Provincial Park

Peace-Liard:

Charlie Lake Provincial Park

Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park

Prince George:

Carp Lake Provincial Park

Mount Robson Provincial Park

Whiskers Point Provincial Park

Thompson River:

Lac du Bois Grasslands Provincial Park

Lac Le Jeune Provincial Park

Monck Provincial Park

Roderick Haig-Brown Provincial Park

Shuswap Provincial Park

Wells Gray Provincial Park

Vancouver Island:

Miracle Beach Provincial Park

Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park

Strathcona Provincial Park

To find out more about Parks Day events in your area, contact your nearest BC Parks district office (www.elp.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/distoff.htm) or visit the Parks Day web site at www.canadianparkspartnership.ca □

Muskwa-Kechika Recreation Plan Signed Off!

by Don Roberts, Peace-Liard District

The first major plan to be developed under the *Muskwa-Kechika Act* is the Muskwa-Kechika Recreation Plan. This plan was signed off by BC Parks Peace-Liard District Manager and the two Ministry of Forests District Managers responsible for the plan under the *Muskwa-Kechika Act* on January 18, 2001.

The final product can be attributed to the strong leadership role of Ron Rutledge. Ron is a Planning Officer and Wilderness Recreation Specialist from the Ministry of Forests, Fort St. John District. Ron was the Chair of the Working Group established to develop the recreation plan. The working group consisted of representatives from First Nations, other Government agencies and the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board. Ron led an extensive public process for development and review of the plan as well.

It took over two years to complete, but the government now has an excellent document to guide recreation management (both public and commercial) in the Muskwa-Kechika. This plan will provide "direction" for the use and management of all parks within the Muskwa-Kechika as well as a wildlife plan which is currently being developed by BC Environment. The 23 Parks/Protected Areas and Eco Reserves in the Muskwa-Kechika include:

- Dall River Old Growth Park
- Denetiah Corridor Protected Area
- Denetiah Park
- Dune Za Kehiy Park
- Dune Za Kehiy Protected Area

(continued on page 5) ►



("Muskwa-Kechika..." continued from page 4)

- Finlay Russel Park
- Finlay Russel Protected Area
- Graham Laurier Park
- Kwadacha Park
- Liard River Corridor Park
- Liard River Corridor Protected Area
- Liard River Hot Springs Park
- Liard River West Corridor Park
- Muncho Lake Park
- Northern Rocky Mountains Park
- Northern Rocky Mountains Protected Area
- Ospika Cones Ecological Reserve
- Prophet River Hot Springs Park
- Redfern Keily Park
- Scatter River Old Growth Park
- Sikanni Chief River Ecological Reserve
- Stone Mountain Park
- Toad River Hot Springs Park

For any who would like to review this recreation plan, you can find it on the LUCO website: <http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca/nrockies/mk0301/index.html>

On April 5, 2001, the Peace Manager's Committee recognized Ron for his tremendous effort in developing this plan. Besides the certificate, Ron was given a dinner for two in one of Fort St. John's finer restaurants. Thanks Ron for your diligent efforts! □



Don Roberts, Chair of the Peace Manager's Committee presenting Ron Rutledge, Ministry of Forests, with a plaque in recognition of his outstanding work in the development of the Muskwa-Kechika Recreation Plan.

Bump on the Log

by Friends of Ecological Reserves

It is with great pleasure that Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER or Friends) submits this article to the BC Parks' newsletter, *VISIONS*. Since the Friends' Newsletter is called *The Log*, we called our contribution "Bump on the Log". *The Log* provides detailed information about Friends of Ecological Reserves activities. You can receive a copy of our newsletter by contacting FER at: Box 8477, Station Central, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1 or e-mailing us at ecoreserves@hotmail.com. We require a small membership fee – unless you are an ecological reserve warden.

There are 149 ecological reserves (ER) in British Columbia today. Ecological reserves are established because they have representative unique, unusual or endangered biota or geological features. Once established ecological reserves function to support appropriate research and education. They are not recreational areas.

Ecological reserves were first established in BC in 1971 as part of an international biological preservation program. The province created the *Ecological Reserve Act* as governing legislation and established an ER program within government. During the '70s the majority of today's ecological reserves were established. In the early '80s, a provincial economic crisis led to funding cuts in the Ecological Reserve Program and the inception of Friends of Ecological Reserves. Friends lobbied hard for protection of ecologically significant areas, focusing on the Khutzeymateen, Haley Lake, Mt. Tzuhalem, the Tsitika and South Moresby in the '80s. In the '90s, Friends remained committed to moving forward a backlog of ecological reserve proposals and also ventured

into the protection of grassland habitat through development of stewardship programs. Friends supported early communication between The Land Conservancy and ranchers. As we move into the new millennium, Friends remain a merry bunch of ecological warriors, seeking only to ensure that those areas designated as ERs are, in fact, protected and new ERs be created and protected from development.



("Bump on the Log" continued from page 5)

all access without a permit from BC Parks.

Another ecological reserve, **Haley Lake**, was established in 1987 to protect a significant colony of Vancouver Island marmot. The Vancouver Island marmot, which was already rare due to limited numbers of suitable colony sites on Vancouver Island, has become endangered. Although the habitat around the ER is no longer suitable for the animals, the ER was the site of the research that underlined the urgency of the plight of the marmot.

These two ecological reserves highlight the importance of reserves for both conservation and research.

Now looking at Friends of Ecological Reserves: there are about 155 members (Friends) throughout the province, as well as many Friends "wannabe's", people who read the newsletter, join us on field trips and support Friends' research commitment. Friends join the organization because they care about ERs and offer FER unique talents and skills.

Once members, Friends may help within the organization, write letters about decisions affecting ERs, or inform us on environmental issues. Board members are active in making decisions regarding research foci, providing content for the newsletter, tracking down funding support and keeping track of membership. Let's glance at a couple of Board members and see if meeting the warriors helps to understand the organization.

Bristol Foster is one of the longest standing Board members; he has been passionate about ecological reserves for a long time. Bristol headed up the Ecological Reserves Unit when it was established in the early '70s. He is an extremely dedicated biologist and provides a deep understanding of the ERs and helps guide Friends into supporting new and exciting areas of research. He is as rare in his endless dedication to knowledge as many of the species he has spent his life studying and protecting.

Syd Cannings is another member of the Board at Friends. Syd is able to

contribute his extensive knowledge of biology and natural history, as well as his extensive knowledge of the province. Syd, and his wife Sue Carr, both sit on the Board; maybe the Board provides an opportunity to address family priorities. As we watch their two children at Board meetings, we are all reminded of our long-term goals and the importance of making an effort to protect ERs today for the scientists of tomorrow. Syd makes sure that Friends never forget the endangered Okanagan lowlands.

Finally, we leave you, the Parks enthusiast, with a few questions.

Are you aware of the ecological reserves near you? Do you know the warden of the local ecological reserves? Can you think of any research that could be conducted in an ecological reserve in your district? Do you know a "bump on the log" who would like to be a Friend? Please write Friends at the address mentioned if you have any ideas, questions or thoughts you would like expanded upon in future columns. □



National Public Service Week: June 10–16

National Public Service Week is June 10–16 this year.

It is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge the value and contributions of BC's public service employees.

The theme this year is *Celebrating Service Excellence and Innovation*.

Look for a list of National Public Service Week events at <http://www.pserc.gov.bc.ca/erp/>

Public Service Week is a great way to acknowledge employees, communicate ministry values and goals and strengthen positive working relationships.



Diane and Denis Moffatt

Denis Moffatt's Retirement Gala

by Giovanni Puggioni, Victoria

Friends and family gathered at the University of Victoria Faculty Club on March 15, 2001 to celebrate Denis Moffatt's retirement after 20-plus years as an employee of BC Parks. Denis retired from the position of Manager, Conservation Services in the Parks and Ecological Reserves Management Branch. Monty Downs hosted the evening; the theme of which was "Beetlemania". The occasion was used to reminisce and Denis recounted his career highlights including the development, with good help, of the "Conservation Principles" that guide BC Parks' management activities.

Included in the festivities were a number of personal and professional tributes as well as another legendary slide show developed by Chris Tunnoch. While Denis has retired as a civil servant, he will continue work as a private consultant with his new company, Edgewood & Associates. From the generous donations received, Denis graciously accepted a personally-signed Robert Bateman print entitled "Winter Cattails - Red-Winged Blackbird". Thank you to all who attended and sent in donations and tributes for the retirement gala. □

Public Service Awards Vancouver Island Region

The Public Service Awards Program is a government program which salutes and showcases individual and group achievements of public service employees. These non-cash awards are presented at three regional luncheons held throughout the year. There are 14 different categories that a person or group can be nominated in including: Change Management, Leadership, Service to the Public and Teamwork. Nominations can come from anyone and an independent adjudication panel reviews all submissions and selects Gold, Silver, Bronze and Special Mentions for each of the categories.

On April 12, 2001 the Public Service Awards luncheon for the Vancouver Island Region was held at the Victoria Conference Centre. **Ron Lampard**, District Manager, Strathcona District, BC Parks received a Bronze "Special Achievement Award" for his excellence as a 35-year BC Parks employee and for the dedication and "tireless energy" he has always given to the BC Parks system. Ron manages one of the largest and most diverse BC Parks' districts in the province. Ron was nominated for the award by Jane Fraser, BC Parks, Strathcona District. **Nancy Chave**, Senior Park Information Officer, BC Parks in Victoria, was chosen as a finalist in the category "Excellent Internal Communications Award" for her work with BC Parks' website and *VISIONS* newsletter. Nancy was nominated by Gail Ross, BC Parks, Victoria.

Congratulations to Ron and Nancy! □



Ron Lampard receives his award from Wendi Lawrence, Vice President, BC Government and Service Employees' Union with nominator Jane Fraser.



Ron Lampard, Lynn Kennedy, Jane Fraser, Nancy Chave, Bob Dalziel at the Vancouver Island Region Public Service Awards luncheon and ceremony.

From the Great White North – Life is good!

by Don Roberts, Peace-Liard District

Most government staff and even a number of the public wonder what takes place in the northern districts over the winter – just what do Area Supervisors and Senior Rangers do during these months?

It's fair to say that with all these new parks and protected areas we now have, life has changed for all staff in the Peace-Liard and Prince George districts, particularly so with Area Supervisors and Senior Rangers. It's been a challenge to understand just what these new parks and protected areas are all about, what's in them, and how to begin to manage them. These new areas have engaged us in Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs). They are now requiring consideration in our Annual Management Planning (AMPs), Facility Management System

updates, GIS mapping, Park Use Permits projects, work plans, etc.

But after months of knuckling down behind the computer and paper on these activities, there comes the opportunity to actually get out and see what these parks are all about.

For the past several years, staff from Prince George and Peace-Liard have made an annual spring trek into Kawka Park, a heavy snowmobile use area. The staff from Prince George head in from the Prince George side and the Peace-Liard staff come in from the Alberta side and they meet at the Park Ranger cabin on Kawka Lake. The trip each year is to monitor winter use in this park and in particular, snowmobile activity.

The pictures tell the rest, life is really good in the north! ☐



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For more information, visit our web site at www.discovercamping.ca ☐

Happy Summer!



*Tell us that it's really coffee in that mug, Hugo!
(Hugo Mulyk, Rob Bressette, Rob MacDonald)*



After months behind the desk it's finally good to get out in a park!

ecological intergrity – the amount of friction found between students and teachers at ecological integrity training? Definition compliments of Michael Goodhelpsen, Strathcona District, who picked up a spelling error in my email notice requesting *VISIONS* articles – Nancy Chave, Editor