

Frances and Bruce  
Burge

## International Year of the Volunteer

by Bill Shaw, Victoria

The United Nations' declaration of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 gives cause for British Columbians to acknowledge and celebrate the voluntary sector within BC Parks. It is therefore appropriate that we take the time to express our admiration and respect for the many volunteers who have enhanced not only BC Parks, but also the experiences of our visitors.

The statements contained in our *Volunteer Program Manual* reflect the philosophy of BC Parks with respect to the appreciation and productivity of our volunteer program.

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Maxine and Doug  
Evenson

## New Volunteer Programs

by Bill Shaw, Victoria

Until recently, most volunteer programs at BC Parks have focused on recreation, but with the expansion of parkland over the last few years conservation activities have become increasingly important. In response to this new focus, two new volunteer

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Don and Evelyn  
Randle

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

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(“New Volunteer...” continued from page 1)  
programs were developed. In 1997 the *Conservation Steward Program* was introduced, followed by BC Parks *Park Watch Program*.

The *Conservation Steward Program* allows organizations or individuals to help in the conservation and protection of natural and cultural diversity within provincial parks and ecological reserves.

This program has a variety of goals, including:

- to identify conservation activities that are needed and conduct them in a timely way
- to increase public awareness of conservation values in protected areas, and publicize conservation volunteer opportunities for groups and individuals
- to recognize and integrate the expertise of Conservation Stewards in project design
- to continually improve the program through regular evaluations.

With the introduction of the *Conservation Steward Program* and the conservation initiatives, BC Park district offices found they needed new volunteer programs that would support conservation activities.

Responding to this need, a new program called *Park Watch* was developed. *Park Watch* provides crucial visitor and conservation monitoring services.

Based on the RCMP's well-known *Neighbourhood Watch Program* and the BC Wildlife Federation, *Park Watch* volunteers monitor and report on visitor activities and natural occurrences in parks and protected areas.

The intent of *Park Watch* is to have more volunteers from the local community, as well as those from the surrounding area who already visit the park or protected area on a regular basis, assist BC Parks. In addition to monitoring visitors, the volunteer may, after receiving specific training, assist in recording inventory data and supporting conservation projects.

The emphasis of *Park Watch* is to observe, record and report. As such, volunteers will not act in the capacity of policing or enforcement. If they encounter a person or persons carrying out an illegal act they do nothing more than record and report the incident to their BC Parks representative.

Examples of provincial *Park Watch* programs:

- Cariboo District has two major *Park Watch* programs underway that focus on monitoring activities at Bowron Lake and Ten-Mile Lake provincial parks.
- In the lower Mainland District, Chilliwack Lake, Kilby, Pinecone Burke and Sasquatch provincial parks are being monitored by *Park Watch*. The 12 volunteers participating in these programs donated 2,680 hours last year.
- The Okanagan District recently initiated a *Park Watch* program at Kalamalka Lake. Thirty volunteers have donated more than 3,000 hours and have significantly reduced the incidence of vandalism.
- The Thompson River District initiated a combination *Wilderness/Park Watch* program in several provincial parks. Thirty-eight volunteers donated over 400 hours of time and have been able to provide the Thompson River District with much needed user information.

In most cases, BC Parks is happy to develop volunteer initiatives that are compatible with individuals, organizations or special interest groups. While not strictly a *Park Watch* program, both the Kootenay District and the Okanagan District have initiated *Conservation Steward* programs with an emphasis on the *Park Watch* module. Both districts have partnered with local Backcountry Horsemen to provide general observation data and do minor maintenance to the trail system. ►

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*("New Volunteer..." continued from page 1)*

Volunteers are required for the conservation management of provincial parks, ecological reserves and protected areas. Ecological Reserve wardens, *Park Watch* volunteers and *Conservation Steward* volunteer opportunities are available for individuals, groups and organizations to assist with monitoring activities going on within and around the provincial parks, ecological reserves and protected areas.

BC Parks welcomes all volunteers, along with their energy, enthusiasm and ideas. If you have any ideas for volunteer opportunities, BC Parks encourages you to bring them forward.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, contact your local BC Parks District Office. □

*("International Year..." continued from page 1)*

### **BC Parks' volunteer program vision is:**

*To enhance the protection and enjoyment of provincial parks, recreation areas and ecological reserves through volunteer partnerships which connect the management of these areas to community pride and personal fulfillment.*

In the year 2000, BC Parks' volunteer inventory recorded that 2,881 volunteers were involved in 234 program/projects for a total of 124,337 hours.

These numbers clearly show how "value of one is the power of many" which is the theme of the International Year of Volunteers.

Volunteers participating in the BC Parks volunteer program have contributed to the protection of our parks, protected areas and ecological reserves and in so doing, enhanced the park visitors' experience by their involvement as:

- park hosts
- marine park hosts
- trail hosts
- backcountry hosts
- Ecological Reserve wardens
- society members
- committee members
- individuals and groups involved in *Conservation Steward* programs or *Park Watch* programs
- special projects

The talent, enthusiasm, integrity and dedication of BC Park volunteers is remarkable and is something that we, as Canadians and British Columbians, can be justly proud. Our volunteer program is the envy of other agencies. The support of these volunteers is deeply appreciated by all employees of BC Parks who recognize and support this valuable program.

Together we can make this world-class park system truly everlasting. □



*Donna and Henry Harder*



*Bob and Lois Simpson*

*...with the Lower Mainland District's newest "host," Shadow, who had his "official" volunteer uniform presented in August.*



*Pat and Bill Sainsbury*



*Joan and Doug Ritchie*



*Our thanks to Marlene Graham, Lower Mainland District Volunteer Host Co-ordinator, for sending these photos.*

# Partnerships and Volunteers

by Earl Sinclair, Thompson River District

Volunteers are an important component of many organizations and BC Parks is no exception. With a variety of volunteer programs to choose from, individuals, clubs and organizations can become involved in a variety of operational and conservational park initiatives. Volunteering can lead to an enhanced appreciation of our park system and a greater awareness of the conservation needs and recreational opportunities of a particular park.

The Thompson River District of BC Parks has expanded in recent years to encompass many new parks. The opportunities to volunteer in the district are greater than ever before. For example, the Park Host Program places volunteers in campgrounds, marine parks, the backcountry or on trails to offer guidance and information to visitors who are less familiar with the site. Conservation volunteers include Ecological Reserve wardens, Conservation

stewards and *Park Watch* volunteers. Recreation volunteers would be assigned to present special programs or initiate special projects. Based on your interests, skills and time available, BC Parks will find a rewarding volunteer assignment for you or your group.

Separate from the volunteer program, but equally important, are the support and contributions from many agencies, organizations, societies and companies for a wide range of BC Parks' programs, activities and research. For example, the Adams River Salmon Society helps to raise funds to put on the "Salute to the Sockeye" event. School District 73 of Kamloops has adopted a trail that leads from Westsyde through to McQueen Lake Educational Center. The Kamloops Naturalists Club has donated many hours towards the clean up of garbage and old car bodies in Lac du Bois Grasslands Provincial Park.

Expand your park experience by considering how you can contribute to the legacy of British Columbia parks. □



## Youth Challenge International

by Rose Coffey, E-Team Intern, Cariboo District

As a challenger, I spent months preparing and fundraising for my trip to Guyana, South America. Youth Challenge International (YCI) looks for youth to work on community development and environmental projects in Central and South America and this was a perfect opportunity to learn about, and live in, the Amazon.

With greatly appreciated support from my hometown, Quesnel, I was able to reach the fundraising target and join up with other challengers for some fantastic adventures.

We worked in the rainforest building a trail and learning about the many critters lurking about as well as some specialties of the jungle such as being able to drink water from tree vines.

We also worked in an Amerindian village, only accessible by paddling. Without electricity, running water or stores, the locals showed us how to live day to day. Together we built a craft centre and had heaps of fun exchanging ideas and being guests in their village.

The hard preparation work paid off for a rewarding and unforgettable experience shared with a new family of friends. □



Earl Sinclair, Extension Officer for Thompson River District, presents Ed and Joan Giles with a gift in appreciation for their ten years of dedicated service as Campground Hosts at Lac le Jeune Provincial Park.



*Strathcona Park Volunteer Host Coordinator Jennifer Williams gives a trail introduction to hikers Pieter and Andrey Buisman.*

## Strathcona's Paradise

*by Valerie Gregor and Andy Smith, Strathcona District*

While the Strathcona District has many frontcountry parks with campground hosts, few similar opportunities exist for backcountry parks. However, with a critical need for visitor support and two communities with a pride and passion to assist, the Strathcona Park/Paradise Meadows Trail Host program was implemented in 1998. The ecologically-sensitive Paradise Meadows is a key entrance to backcountry hiking opportunities within Strathcona Park. It is also located close to Mt. Washington Alpine Resort, which adds to park visits and the need for an information program.

A key role of volunteer trail hosts is disbursing information from a trailhead hut while hiking the more popular day-use trails. Visitors are provided with brochures, maps and up-to-date information on trail conditions and local flora and fauna. The trail host program extends from late June through September with volunteers usually committing to work in the park three to six hours a week.

The pool of volunteers is recruited from both Campbell River and Courtenay areas and the key attraction for most people is the informal structure of the program. No scheduled commitments are needed unless they wish, but rather the volunteers simply stop into the trailhead hut if they are going for a hike and pick up a small pack, vest and hat before heading out on the trails. The other option is to staff the information hut for a couple of hours on the weekend or do both for some diversity. All trail hosts are given a detailed orientation each Spring but most make a concerted effort to learn more about the park on their own time. The trail hosts play an important role in preserving the ecological integrity of Paradise Meadows, educating the public about the parks' natural history and how to recreate safely. The volunteers are quite diverse, including students, retirees, hiking enthusiasts and those with no experience at all. The one thing they all have in common is a passion for the outdoors and a pride in showing off Strathcona Park. □

## An Influential Friend

*by Kathy McCauley, Kootenay District*

It pays to have friends with influence and Kootenay District Parks has one indeed in Mildred White. A BC Parks volunteer since the 1970s, she has been indispensable in establishing the flora and fauna databases upon which park management plans are based. Equally significant, because Mildred is involved in so many organizations and committees throughout the region and province, she has many friends and contacts and is often in a position to share information. Most important of all, Mildred's enthusiasm for nature conservation is an inspiration to everyone who's fortunate enough to cross her path. Her determination to keep on working for nature, even though she's now eighty-five years of age, gets everyone else off their duff and fired up too. She's a powerful voice for conservation in the Kootenays and, lucky for BC Parks, she's on our side.



*Mildred White's enthusiasm for nature conservation is an inspiration to everyone.*

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(“...Friend” continued from page 5)

Mildred’s most easily measurable contribution to BC Parks is her commitment to providing detailed and comprehensive bird and plant checklists from parks and protected areas, records which are used to compile park-specific inventories and management plans. Thanks to Mildred’s vigilance, recently designed grassland restoration plans include management prescriptions to identify and protect special features such as rare milkweed plants, the only place monarch butterflies will deposit eggs. Mildred’s reports formed the basis for the bird inventory data section of the Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping project for Wasa Lake Park. Her checklists are shared with the Conservation Data Centre where the information enters the provincial database.

The other obvious contribution that Mildred makes to BC Parks is

her dozens of slide presentations and interpretive talks given to campground visitors throughout the hot Kootenay summers. She’s a nationally-recognized, award-winning nature photographer, as was her late husband, and she chooses from thousands of catalogued slides to make each presentation unique.

It is within her role of presenter and member of important nature organizations that Mildred performs a less apparent but crucial public relations job for BC Parks. As one of the Kootenay’s leading authorities on bird and plant life, she’s often a main speaker at important events like the Botany BC and Federation of British Columbia Naturalists conferences. As a member, and often leader, of groups such as the Rocky Mountain Naturalists’ Club, Kimberley Nature Park, Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources and East Kootenay Environmental Societies,

she’s in a position to educate and influence people.

“I feel I can talk knowledgeably about park policies when the issues come up,” says Mildred. “Some people are very critical of conservation and recreation policies. They don’t understand because they don’t take the time to ask questions. I go into the parks and ask them about what they’re doing and I don’t hesitate to tell others what I learn.”

Kootenay Provincial Parks’ personnel are always delighted when Mildred does stop in. “She’s a wonderful person and role model for any naturalist, a constant inspiration to me,” says Extension Officer, Ida Cale. Resource Officer, Mike Gall, shares Ida’s respect for Mildred. “It increases my sense of awareness of nature just being around her,” he says. “She’s a true Friend to BC Parks.” □



*A scale model of Newcastle Island Provincial Marine Park complete with buildings, trails and other developed facilities will appear on the donor wall.*

## Donor Recognition for Newcastle Island

*by Drew Chapman,  
South Vancouver Island District*

Donor recognition has been taken to a new level on Newcastle Island. The initial plan was to develop a donor recognition wall in the pavilion on Newcastle Island to recognize the past 40 years of contributors to the park. Funds were needed to create and install the donor recognition panel and since we didn’t have the budget, the Newcastle Island Society was approached. The Newcastle Island Society has contributed to many of the past projects on the island such as the welcoming poles, adventure playground and other features. We had to sell them on the

*(continued on page 7) ►*

(“...Newcastle Island” continued from page 6)  
idea of supporting this project and not only did they buy into it, they also saw this as an opportunity to raise more funds. The society hired Boulet Graphics who design donor recognition walls for hospitals as well as displays for Disneyland and other large corporations.

As Norm Boulet explained to us, most donor walls recognize contributors, they don't try to solicit funds. Therefore we were coming up with something a little “off-the-wall” that would not only recognize contributors, but also would solicit them through giving information on the island and the opportunity to see their name on a board.

There were several design challenges: the first was how to list the donors, as anyone who donates would expect to see their name on the wall. We therefore set a dollar limit that allowed for various stages of contributions for corporate and large private donations. For individual donations under \$2,000, the donor's name would go into a book that would be located in the pavilion. The second challenge was that the Newcastle Island Society also wanted the panel to be portable so that it could be removed from the island in the winter and used for fund raising activities and mall displays. Of course this led to the next challenge: it had to be large enough to allow for the past 40 years of contributions as well as the next 40 years. Then after all that we had to ensure that we covered Newcastle Islands' varied history and identify the opportunities for contributors, while protecting and presenting the cultural and recreational values of this park. To top it all off we had to think of ecological integrity and BC Parks' standards.

It took a year of planning, eight months of construction, the Societies' \$14,000 contribution and “revisiting” the standards manual to complete the panel. Although this may seem like a significant amount of up-front money for donor recognition and fundraising, we see this as an

investment to ensure continued public support for this special park.

The new 6 x 10-foot donor wall was installed at the end of August and a dedication was done shortly afterwards. The donor wall depicts a scale model of Newcastle Island Provincial Marine Park complete with buildings, trails and other developed facilities as well as the areas of cultural and recreational values. The wall recognizes the contributions already made to this unique island and identifies other donation opportunities.

Unfortunately there is just too much to fit in a *VISIONS* article to tell about this donor wall and the benefits it will provide to the park and the Newcastle Island Society, therefore you will have to visit the island and see this unique wall of recognition for yourself. □



*Lower Mainland District Hosts touring the newly-acquired Nahatlach Provincial Park.*

## Life Doesn't Get Much Better Than This!

*by Dan Frankel, Volunteer Trip Leader, Sierra Club*

Few are the times when one's already high expectations are exceeded, yet volunteering to work with BC Parks on Mt. Robson Park's Berg Lake Trail provided me with just such an experience.

In August 2000, I coordinated a trip of ten Sierra Club members to work with BC Parks on a steep, hazardous section of trail just before the Emperor Falls campground. The work involved leveling trail, digging drainage, moving rocks, moving more rocks, carpentry and revegetation.

Before we began the trail looked like a rock-strewn, runoff gully. When we were through there was a level, gravel-topped trail with a distinct drainage channel and, at the steepest parts, we built wooden and stone stairways. We were quite proud of our work as we could see we had made a significant difference. One seasoned hiker of the trail managed to pant out, “If this is heaven, you must be its angels.”

People who volunteer to do hard work in the wilderness, often travelling great distances and taking vacation time, are a special breed. In our group (and in general) they find fulfillment in service, joy in nature and pleasure in people. They care about nature, about their work and, by the end of the trip, about each other. They make everything fun and are never too busy to stop and listen to a bird or discuss wildflower identification.

The following words of one participant, taken from our group journal, summarized our work days: “Woke up a bit sore, the group did a

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*(“Life...” continued from page 7)*

lot of work yesterday, the ravine was re-graded, retaining wall for the new trail was set, stone steps started up top and fill put in ... Much of the same today... Quit about 4-ish, pooped! ... This group is great, we keep each other laughing.”

Our non-work days provided us with the opportunity to get to know the area even better. One day we hiked to Robson Glacier, played along its edge and ended the day with homemade ice cream. Life doesn't get much better than this! On another day we viewed Hargreaves Lake and Glacier, saw Toboggan Falls and trekked through lovely Mumm Basin. The gorgeous scenery was accented by the occasional crackling background sound of blocks of the Berg Glacier “calving” off and into Berg Lake.

BC Parks made the trip both useful and enjoyable in countless ways, big and small. Not only did they thoroughly plan and prepare for our work project, but also they assisted with transportation, setting up our base camp and kitchen, educating us about the park, suggesting activities for our non-work days, and offering cups of tea and smiles.

The satisfaction I feel as I see work being accomplished and new friendships being made is immense. I am touched and inspired by the conscientious efforts of all. I am impressed and deeply appreciative of BC Parks' commitment and support. At the end of the trip I am physically drained yet spiritually revived.

While working our last day I paused to chat with a passing backpacker. As she left she said, “Have an awesome day.” I gazed at the surrounding scenery, my fellow volunteers, our trail accomplishments and thought, yes, awesome indeed. □



*Section of the trail before the volunteer project.*



*The volunteer group sitting on newly constructed stairs.*

## Remarkable Backcountry Hosts of Kakwa

*by Christine Jones, Prince George District*

As the early morning light gently awakens you and the sounds of wilderness surround you, it is not long before the reality of being a volunteer backcountry host at Kakwa Provincial Park is upon you.

Located approximately 70 kilometres north of McBride, British Columbia, this park, established in July 1999, encompasses an area of 170,890 hectares. Showcasing ice-clad mountains, pristine alpine lakes, extensive alpine meadow systems and a section of the Continental Divide, it is truly a wilderness jewel.

Cool, crisp and invigorating typically describes the dawning of each new hosting day at Kakwa Provincial Park with wilderness adventure at the top of every volunteer backcountry host's list. Nevertheless, in order to reach the top of that list, certain hosting qualifications and tasks are essential not only for backcountry adventure but also backcountry survival.

In order to qualify for a volunteer backcountry hosting opportunity at this park, certain minimum qualifications have been established to ensure a safe, enjoyable and memorable backcountry hosting experience for all volunteers. Those minimum qualifications include (but are limited to) being mature and self-reliant, physically fit, able to hand-start a small generator, extensive backcountry hiking, current first-aid and performing minor maintenance and enhancement projects.

Once in the backcountry of Kakwa Provincial Park, certain responsibilities are expected of our volunteer backcountry hosts. Those responsibilities range from monitoring and recording

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(“...Kakwa” continued from page 8)

visitor use, documenting wildlife sightings, distributing information to park visitors, caring for campsites and pit toilets, installing and maintaining signs, picking up and disposing of litter and maintaining the cabins and storage facilities.

It would appear that the above tasks would be sufficient in keeping a backcountry host occupied, but this special breed of volunteer is always searching for a new endeavour.

Many of our volunteer backcountry hosts convey their passion of flora and fauna, hiking and photography by embarking on an assortment of very individual projects. These undertakings vary from an inventory of Kakwa’s routes and hiking trails to a baseline inventory of Kakwa’s flora. Each of these ventures by our volunteer backcountry hosts assist in the continued protection and management of the park for which BC Parks is truly grateful.

In the evening, as the sunset draws a close to the day and the calmness of Kakwa Lake takes hold, a time for reflections emerges. Moments, experiences and



*Hosts at Kakwa Lake cabin, Norm and Barb Monroe.*

wilderness backcountry adventures are replayed like a movie, leaving those who experience Kakwa with a special gift as unique and individual as our fingerprints. For some the experience is truly life-altering.

It is through these shared stories

of adventure that we draw our energy, drive and conviction knowing that this type of volunteer opportunity contributes to the overall well being of our backcountry hosts and the British Columbia park system. □



*An aerial view of the Khutzeymateen.*

## Volunteering for Conservation

*by Ken Zimmer, Skeena District*

Located 45 kilometres northeast of Prince Rupert, the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary is the first area in Canada to be protected specifically for grizzly bears and their habitat. The topography of this land and marine sanctuary is diverse, with rugged peaks towering to 2,100 meters above a valley of wetlands, old-growth temperate rainforests and the most popular attraction, a large estuary. Approximately 50 grizzly bears frequent this rich area, the largest known concentration along British Columbia’s coast.

The region of the Sanctuary has been an important territory for the Gitsi’is First Nation for thousands of

years. To the Gitsi’is the land has spiritual significance and they consider the grizzly bear sacred, a spirit animal of their people.

Because of this area’s high sensitivity and strict conservation orientation, regular visitor use is not encouraged. Both fishing and hunting are prohibited in the sanctuary, however, a limited amount of controlled, guided viewing is allowed under permit.

Due to the remote location of the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, volunteer Park Hosts are essential in assisting BC Parks in monitoring visitor use and access.

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*("Volunteering..." continued from page 9)*

Hosts are provided a trailer, located on a barge that is anchored in the inlet. As part of the conservation goals, there are no land-based accommodation or facilities.

As the estuary can only be accessed by boat or floatplane; all visitors must first check in with the Park Hosts. Hosts are responsible for greeting all visitors and providing them with information on the Sanctuary, to ensure that they understand the Sanctuary rules. Hosts are also in charge of keeping a detailed log of all park users, providing BC Parks with accurate attendance statistics. The visible presence of Park Hosts also effectively deters unregulated activities and reduces security concerns. Hosts act not only as an interactive source of information for visitors, but also the eyes and ears of BC Parks. They are on the scene to identify potential problems, making it possible for staff to respond quickly. Khutzeymateen Hosts are only guardians of the Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, however, and are restricted to the role of observing, recording and reporting. They are not empowered as peace officers or responsible for enforcement.

When people visit the Sanctuary, their experience is often enhanced through the welcoming atmosphere created by the Park Hosts. Hosts play an important role in providing the public with information not only on policies and regulations, but also with park conservation ethics. Visitors have an excellent opportunity to benefit from the Hosts' knowledge; learning more about the importance of respecting conservation guidelines and leading to a greater sense of appreciation and respect for the Sanctuary.

The role of the Park Host in the Khutzeymateen is understandably a much sought-after volunteer opportunity with BC Parks. As such, the waitlist for a chance to be a Park Host there often extends for a few years. Volunteer Hosts get to expand their own knowledge of the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, increase their outdoor and interpersonal skills and be recognized and appreciated by staff and visitors. For a Host, spending an extended period of time in one of British Columbia's most outstanding marine parks and meeting people from around the world, is more than just a volunteer position; it's a one-of-a-kind experience. □



*The only "chip" on Bernadette Beesley's shoulder is her friend Chip the squirrel.*

## Chip On Her Shoulder

*by Jesse Jones, Thompson River District*

There are two qualities that best describe Bernadette Beesley as a volunteer: her hard work and her devotion to whom she volunteers.

Bernadette has been volunteering her time to BC Parks and the campers at Shuswap Lake Park for 16 years. She started out helping care for the "critters" in the Nature House and over the years that evolved into her own daily shows and occasional interpretive field trips.

Bernadette spends endless hours each week taking care of the animals and preparing her shows. She can often be found in the Nature House in the "wee" hours doing the glamorous job of cleaning the cages and tanks so the animals can stay healthy and happy.

Although Bernadette works very hard, she cannot take all the credit; her sons Derek and Mark have been helping their mom for many years and have been enormously helpful in looking after the animals and putting on the interpretive shows.

Bernadette has always loved working with children. Her volunteer work with children doesn't stop with BC Parks, the Cubs, Beavers, and Scouts, as well as the Kamloops International Bantam Hockey

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*As part of the conservation goals, there are no land-based accommodation or facilities. The host accommodation is provided on a barge that is anchored in the inlet.*

*("Chip..." continued from page 11)*

Tournament, all receive her devotion and hard work as a volunteer. On top of all this Bernadette still finds time to dabble in a little acting and sing in a choir every Sunday.

As you have probably already figured out the only "chip" on

Bernadette's shoulder is her friend Chip the squirrel. In another act of kindness she rescued Chip after he had fallen out of his nest and was abandoned as a baby. Chip was blind and injured from the fall. Bernadette and her sons looked after Chip until he was healthy again. Chip is now a

very important part of Bernadette's show and incidentally a very famous squirrel in these parts.

Thank you Bernadette, for your devotion as a BC Parks' volunteer and your selfless commitment to the thousands of kids who visit the Nature House each season. □

## Horsemen in the High Country

*by Greg Betz, Okanagan District*

The Cascade Recreation Area, located on the northwest boundary of Manning Provincial Park, is now under the care and protection of the Backcountry Horsemen of British Columbia. In 1998 a formal agreement of stewardship was initiated to carefully and effectively conduct conservation activities in the Cascade Recreation Area. In the past most programs were recreation-based, now a greater emphasis is being placed on conservation and volunteers can get involved in a variety of ways.

One of the major challenges for BC Parks is to manage areas such as the Cascade Recreation Area using very limited resources. In the past, BC Parks' presence was minimal as park rangers would be fortunate to make two patrols each season. Although visitor use is relatively low we needed to get a better idea of overall use and management issues.

The recreation area is not only attractive because of its natural setting and pristine values, it also has a new cabin and corrals. The facilities were constructed with Forest Renewal BC funds in the mid-'90s and are now the home base for the group. A strategy had to be developed to maintain the cabin and corrals, inventory the trails, conduct public relations, and repair and maintain over 75 kilometres of trail.



*Bev Helman assists in some alpine trucking – hauling gravel in the backcountry.*

The area has been a long time favorite playground for the Backcountry Horsemen and it was quite obvious that it was special to the group. It looked like a perfect and natural fit. Through the efforts of President Doris McAdie and recently retired BC Parks' employee John Rose, things started to get rolling. One of the first tasks was to identify the role of the group and determine what the group could do to compliment the objectives of the Conservation Steward Program. This was going to be much more than Observe, Record and Report. Here was an opportunity to best utilize the skills and interests of the entire group.

The members of the Backcountry Horsemen come from various backgrounds with individual clubs spread across the province. The

Lower Mainland Club has been using this area for years and several members have an intimate knowledge of the area. We needed to take advantage of that knowledge and support and, as Conservation Stewards, we now had that ability. Members of the club describe their role as rewarding and feel privileged to work and play in such a beautiful area.

As one of the group said "A great first between BC Parks and a volunteer group". BC Parks has a Vision Statement for the Extension Program that reads: **BC Parks will become a leader in communicating and engaging the public to become active stewards of their protected area system.** BC Parks' relationship with the Backcountry Horsemen of British Columbia is one of the first steps in having that vision become reality. □



## Cariboo Staff Volunteers

### Glen Davidson, Resource Officer

If you ride, slide or glide, Glen's your guy. He has an amazing record of taking on those volunteer positions that can seem almost like full time work.

**Riding:** He has been president of the Laketown Endurance Riders for four years, and was ride manager for the Cariboo Gold Endurance Riders for three years. These are the folks who cover incredible distances on horseback; typical races go 50 or 100 miles.

**Sliding:** Glen has been on the executive (one year as president) of Williams Lake Cross-Country Ski Club for 12 years. Right now he's leading fundraising and trail building efforts so our trails will be ready for the 2002 British Columbia Winter Games. He was Chief of Race for the Bull Mountain Challenge loppet for the last three years.

**Gliding:** An active member of the Williams Lake Canoe Club, Glen was instrumental in building two 26-foot cedar strip voyageur canoes.

### Ken Russell, Senior Ranger

Ken volunteered his services to the Stream Keepers Society, doing a Stream Assessment of the Nile River on Vancouver Island. The work consisted of 60 hours of fieldwork assessing the river and its biological attributes. Additionally, there were 15 hours of desk work compiling the information on a specialized spread sheet and then submitting a formal report to the Ministry of Environment. Finally, Ken presented his information at a public forum followed by a question and answer period. "It was fun and I learned a lot," he said.

### Kate Alexander, Extension Officer

Very appropriately for her current job, Kate got her start in BC Parks through volunteering. Kate was at school in Boston, USA, in 1987, but knew she was heading in the wrong direction. When she heard about the Backcountry Host program of the US National Forests, Kate jumped at it. She was an unpaid backcountry ranger there for three months and did solo patrols of the Presidential Range - lots of PR, cautioning people about thunderstorm exposure, bears, rough trails, etc., as well as maintaining very primitive composting toilets, assisting searches, and doing an impact study. The US Forest Service provided "room" (a wall tent with frequent raccoon visitors) and "board" (including an unlimited supply of chocolate bars), and staff assistance with transportation to trailheads.

Since then Kate continued volunteering: New Zealand National Parks; the Crisis Line in Courtenay; here in Williams Lake; Search and Rescue; teaching kids cross-country skiing; and, most recently, on the board of the Volunteer Centre. □

## A Salute to the Sargeant Bay Society

by Vicki Haberl,  
Garibaldi/Sunshine Coast District

A belted kingfisher clack, clack, clacks its way through the air while red-winged blackbirds dart amongst the willows and cattails. The beavers are somewhere in that semi-aquatic world that most of us never see them in, but signs of their presence are everywhere. The wetland at Sargeant Bay Provincial Park is a magical place in the early morning light, a welcome refuge along the burgeoning Sunshine Coast.

Its peace and tranquility is not to be taken for granted. The natural beauty and thriving wildlife habitat very nearly followed the fate of most other shoreline habitats along the Sunshine Coast. Were it not for the passionate efforts of a group of local residents, Sargeant Bay would be a different place today. A non-profit society was formed in the late 1970s to advocate for protection of Sargeant Bay from marina and residential development.

The Sargeant Bay Society's legacy of success began in 1990, when 57 hectares were protected as a Class A park. The Society then worked with BC Parks to develop the background document for a Park Management Plan. The local knowledge and expertise of Society members provided BC Parks with essential information regarding natural values, visitor use trends, history, etc. From the beginning of the relationship with BC Parks, the Society provided cooperative input and support in setting the future direction of our management of this area throughout the management planning process.

With the management plan as a guiding tool, the Society then began plans for wetland rehabilitation and

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(“A Salute...” continued from page 12)

habitat enhancement for fish and wildlife. This comprehensive plan was achieved over several years, in cooperation with BC Parks, Salmonid Enhancement Program, Ducks Unlimited, and through corporate grants, Habitat Conservation Fund grants and Environmental Partner grants.

The Society developed a comprehensive vegetation inventory, and subsequently embarked upon an invasive species control program. This program has been ongoing for several years, and has included the efforts of volunteers, as well as Society sponsored E-Teams and numerous grants. Species such as Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry have been almost completely eradicated. Several blue-listed species have been identified.

Similarly, the Society produced a wildlife inventory, and from this, compiled and published a bird checklist. Educational messages and wildlife viewing ethics are promoted. Annual events are conducted to count and inventory birds, wildlife and vegetation.

Over the years, Society members have worked tirelessly as volunteers to build and maintain hiking trails for public enjoyment. Through the different interests of various individuals, environmental education events are offered to the community, including beach seines, guided nature walks, and wetland observation.

In 1996, the Society submitted a proposal to the Lower Mainland

Protected Areas Strategy for the expansion to Sargeant Bay Provincial Park. Through these efforts, an 83-hectare addition, including the Triangle Lake wetland, and the trail that connects it to Sargeant Bay, were added to the park, increasing its size to 140 hectares. Society members recently prepared a background report for an updated management plan for the expanded park.

The Sargeant Bay newsletter has been published since the group's inception. Informative and effective, it is an example of the quality of work typical of this organization. It conveys their strong stewardship mandate and reflects the supportive, cooperative relationship the Society shares with BC Parks.

Sargeant Bay Provincial Park would not be what it is today without the Society's enthusiasm and commitment to the values of this beautiful place on the Sunshine Coast. In this, the International Year of Volunteers, BC Parks is installing a bench on the berm in recognition of the extraordinary efforts of the Sargeant Bay Society.

As one of the Society's key members and hard working volunteers prepares to “retire” from the upper ranks, we would also like to express a special thanks to Joop Burgerjon for his leadership and tireless energy for the preservation and enhancement of Sargeant Bay Provincial Park. His efforts will be forever enjoyed by the people of British Columbia – and by the kingfishers, blackbirds, beavers and other creatures of Sargeant Bay. □



*Joop Burgerjon observes new growth in the Sargeant Bay wetland, 1991.*

## HMCS *Protecteur* Crew Help the Cowichan

*by Michael MacIntyre,  
South Vancouver Island District*

Chief Petty Officer Mike Fuller, a Chief Electrician in the Canadian Navy and a crew member of the HMCS *Protecteur*, loves to fish. This passion led Fuller to volunteer the services of his crewmates to do work on the Cowichan River trail system. The Cowichan is one of the best recreational fishing rivers in the world, and Fuller, a resident of Cowichan Bay, has spent many an hour fishing from its banks.

In May of this year the *Protecteur* was scheduled for refit. In March, Fuller contacted BC Parks' Cowichan area staff with a plan to volunteer his services and those of the *Protecteur's* crew to do trail work along Cowichan Rivers' historic Spring Pool fishers trail. This work, Fuller explained, would serve the dual purpose of keeping his crew active during an idle period and improving access to some great fishing spots. BC Parks recognized this project as an opportunity to remedy a number of safety and environmental impact concerns associated with this long-standing river access trail.

The HMCS *Protecteur* volunteer trail crew arrived in mid-May and represented a highly skilled and very strong work force. Park Care Services, the Park Facility Operators for Cowichan River Provincial Park, generously provided the *Protecteur* crew with free accommodations in Cowichan River's beautiful group campsites at Horseshoe Bend and Stoltz Pool. BC Parks supplied material and did site planning/preparation for the project. With the joint cooperation of these three entities the project was ready to commence.

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(HMCS *Protecteur*...” continued from page 13)



An example of the blowdowns and trail conditions encountered.



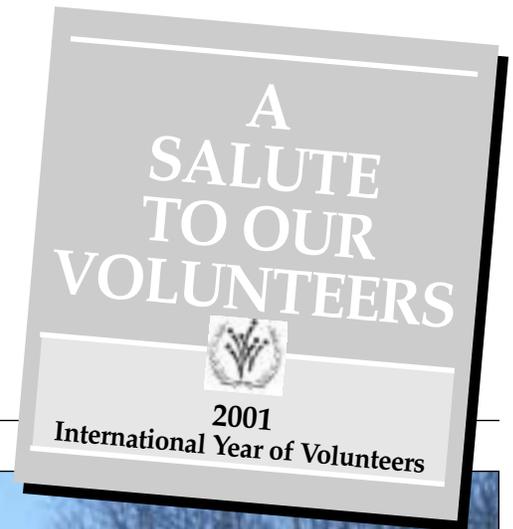
The result – a well groomed trail.

The next two weeks saw the members of the *Protecteur*'s crew working on the Spring Pool trail. The project included replacement of an aging 16-foot creek crossing, construction of boardwalk over wet areas, trail resurfacing, drainage course restoration, deactivation of braided trails, and trail brushing. The results were fantastic, as what had become a rough cut trail that required fishers to climb blowdown and slosh through mud, was restored to its former condition – a well groomed path to a number of pristine fishing holes.

Along with the Spring Pool trail restoration, the crew was also able to work on a section of the Trans Canada Trail just west of Skutz Falls. The *Protecteur* volunteers removed encroaching alder and broom for several kilometers, establishing proper trail width for the hiking, biking and equestrian user groups enjoying this route. By the end of their two weeks along Cowichan River the *Protecteur*'s crew had

brushed a sizable section of the Trans Canada Trail and had dramatically improved the Spring Pool trail.

BC Parks would like to thank the crew of the HMCS *Protecteur* for their hard work in Cowichan River Provincial Park. This is just another example of how the effort of a few volunteers benefits the experience of many other people. As for Mike Fuller, we fully expect to see him down by the side of Spring Pool this January, maybe lighting into a nice silver steelhead. Happy fishing Mike, and thanks from BC Parks. □

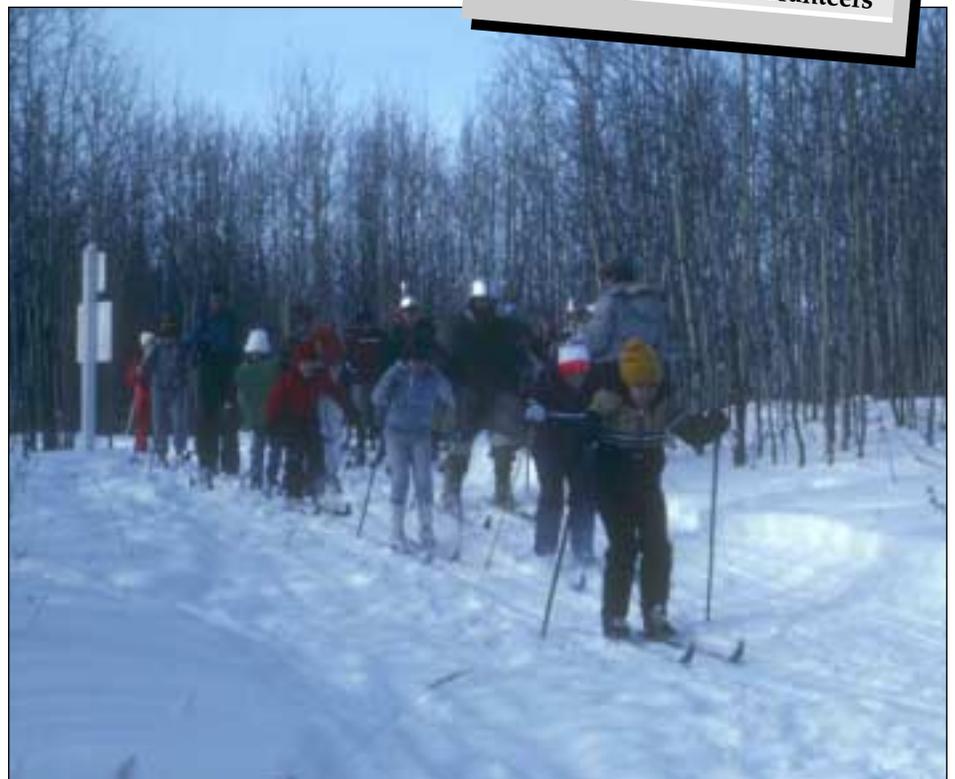


## Whiskeyjack Nordic Club

by Mike Neto, Peace-Liard District

For the past nine years, volunteer members of the Whiskeyjack Nordic Ski Club have maintained the cross-country ski trails at Beatton Provincial Park. This park is located 15 minutes north of Fort St. John and in the winter it offers 12 kilometres of set ski trails, as well as a toboggan hill for kids and the young at heart to ski or slide.

During the winter months (even when it hits the -40°C mark) the club trims encroaching vegetation, clears deadfalls, installs snowfences, grooms and sets ski trails. These are the only groomed and set trails near town. Because of the Whiskeyjack Nordic Club's efforts, the trails offer excellent skiing for everyone. Thank-you Whiskeyjack Nordic Club! □



Thanks to the Whiskeyjack Nordic Club for providing excellent cross-country skiing conditions in Beatton Provincial Park.

# Volunteers Restore Cabin

by Nicole Smith,  
Thompson River District

A special thanks to Jim and Barb McWilliams for their volunteer groups' efforts in restoring the Diamond Lagoon cabin at Murtle Lake in Wells Gray Provincial Park. The members of the volunteer group included Barb and Jim McWilliams, Jeff McWilliams (son), Tony Stea (son-in-law), Rob and Anne-Shirley Goodell and Philip Anderson from Mahood Lake.

Seven years ago while canoeing on Murtle Lake with the Goodell's, Jim and Barb McWilliams came up with the idea of re-roofing the Diamond Lagoon cabin. The cabin was in need of work to help restore and protect it and the family wanted to do something in memory of Jim's father, Harold G. McWilliams. The Murtle Lake area was one of Harold's favorite places and the family thought it would be a great location for the memorial project. Harold McWilliams was both Director of Parks and Deputy Minister of the Department of Recreation and Conservation from 1957 to 1971. Prior to that time he was the first head of re-forestation with the BC Forest Service.

On August 6, 2001 the McWilliams set out for Diamond Lagoon where they would spend three workdays restoring and re-roofing the



(left to right) Philip Anderson, Tony Stea, Jim McWilliams, Barb McWilliams, Jeff McWilliams, Anne-Shirley Goodell and Rob Goodell.

Diamond Lagoon cabin. The cabin was originally built in 1937 by Howard and Charlie Mobley for the Seattle Rod and Gun Club and is located at a campsite on the west arm of Murtle Lake. This heritage cabin is often utilized by canoeists as a bad weather shelter.

The volunteer group not only re-roofed the cabin, they also cleaned out the inside and repaired the bunk beds. They built and stained two picnic tables for the site and dug out the base logs, replacing one of the logs which had rotted over the years. The McWilliams family supplied all the material used in the project and

Park Rangers and volunteers helped with transportation of the material. BC Parks also provided the memorial plaque which was mounted above the door of the cabin.

Once again BC Parks would like to thank the McWilliams volunteer group for all their time and effort in preserving the cabin at Diamond Lagoon. The work done by the group has greatly increased the life expectancy of the cabin. It was a tough three days of work with a few glitches, but the family felt the end results were well worth it. (Not to mention the sunshine and good fishing.) □

## Park Watch at Bowron Lake Park

by Kate Alexander, Cariboo District

Bowron Lake Provincial Park is thoroughly "watched" during the summer months, when thousands of paddlers come to enjoy the spectacular canoe circuit. We have both rangers and park operators out on the circuit doing maintenance and enforcement. The rest of the year, it's another story. Bowron is quiet – or we hope it is.

That's why five years ago we recruited Leif and Eva Grandell of Barkerville to keep an eye on the park in the off-season. As *Park Watch* volunteers, their job is quite simple: to go there, look for unusual occurrences and then tell us what they saw; actions commonly known as observe, record and report.

For instance, they might find an increase in people paddling in the off seasons – braving wind or even snow, or see wildlife, or even detect illegal activities. Anything they come across, they report. Beyond this, however, they do not have a role in enforcement, which is done by staff.

Leif and Eva have introduced an unusual means of locomotion from their native Sweden: kick-sleds. A cross between a scooter and a



PHOTO: LEIF GRANDELL

Eva Grandell skims across Bowron Lake on her kick-sled.

toboggan, these are ideal for crossing frozen lakes covered in hard, icy snow. The Grandells' professions of photography and graphic design give them the sharp eyes needed in *Park Watch*. They are also expert canoe paddlers.

Leif and Eva both love the outdoors, and would go out to Bowron Lake Provincial Park whether volunteering or not. This, combined with excellent communication skills, makes them ideal park watchers. They are also wardens for Mt. Tinsdale Ecological Reserve, above Barkerville. These people do great work. Thank you, Leif and Eva! □



*Natalie Jodoin, 4, and Laura Jodoin, 9, learn about the natural features of the park from host, Lynne Carmichael.*

## Helliwell Stewardship Group

*by Valerie Gregor and Andy Smith  
Strathcona District*

Helliwell Park is located at St. John's Point on Hornby Island. The park was established in 1966 after John Helliwell donated the land to the people of British Columbia. The park is made up of 69 hectares of land and 2,734 hectares of waters surrounding Flora Islet. Its beauty and unique sensitive ecosystem has inspired the local residents of Hornby Island to become involved with the stewardship of the park.

The Helliwell Park Stewardship Group (HPSG), formed in 1999, is actively involved in the management planning of the park, including background research and input into the ecosystem based management plan. The HPSG also provides what seems

to be a continuous amount of field-work. The group eagerly embraced the formation of a volunteer Trail Host program in the Spring of 2001 and currently has 18 members who provide almost daily attendance in the park. The Trail Hosts provide visitors with valuable information about the park while monitoring visitor activity and making recommendations to district park staff.

Helliwell Park Stewardship Group also recently partnered with BC Parks to develop both a "Role of the Park" sign and new trailhead interpretative sign, working together to develop the designs and text. HPSG member, Lynne Carmichael, also a professional artist, donated her time to create the 60 by 40-inch watercolor painting for the trailhead, depicting the diversity of the park and some of its unique and rare species. While the artist requested a below-market value amount for her work, she donated the money to the HPSG for future park improvements. The uniqueness of the sign has prompted the desire to develop a poster of the artwork to sell and raise funds for the park. The HPSG will also be spearheading the development of a park brochure which can provide more detailed information about the park's sensitive ecosystem.

The volunteers accentuate the park facilities through their almost daily attendance. They maintain an information cabinet located at the trailhead shelter which they continually update with information about the natural features of the park. The Trail Host committee also developed a special network of bricks that link with cord edging the trail. The edging keeps people on the trail and protects the vegetation without detracting from the natural beauty.

The Helliwell Park Stewardship Group is committed to ecological preservation and continually reconfirms the effectiveness of involving the community in park management. The group's passion and dedication of time is a fine example of successful volunteerism in British Columbia. □

## Clowning in the Cariboo

*by Kate Alexander, Cariboo District*

A new kind of park volunteer has made an appearance at Green Lake Provincial Park in the South Cariboo. We thought we had recruited a Campground Host. What we got was Dee Dee the Clown. She is a major attraction – so much so that Sunset View campground was completely full for three weeks during her stay (unheard of in the past), and people are asking where Dee Dee is going next, so they can camp there, too.

Diane Mairs and her husband Gerry are from Westbank, near Kelowna. They're both active community volunteers, involved with the hospital, community policing and the food bank. During her training at the hospital, Diane learned how to be a caring clown with the stage name Dee Dee. These volunteer clowns bring humour and love to warm up a difficult environment, much like Robin Williams did in Hollywood's "Patch Adams."

There's nothing difficult about Green Lake, and kids readily respond to Dee Dee's games, arts and crafts and face painting activities. Adults appreciate the photo journal of the people Diane and Gerry meet through hosting. We are very glad to have Dee Dee/Diane and Gerry on board – thank you! □



PHOTO: GERRY MAIRS

*Facepainting with Dee Dee at Green Lake.*