

Welcome to our new Minister...



*The Honourable Joan Sawicki
Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks*

Joan Sawicki is a graduate of the University of Victoria, with a Bachelor's Degree of Education in Canadian History and Geography. She was first elected to represent the constituency of Burnaby-Willingdon in 1991 and was re-elected in the 1996 general election. Ms. Sawicki served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks from June 1996 to January 1998.

For 12 years prior to her election, she was a partner in a land use consulting firm, working on a wide range of natural resource management issues. Ms. Sawicki also worked for six years with the British Columbia Agricultural Land Commission.

Ms. Sawicki served on Burnaby Municipal Council from 1987 to 1990. As Chair of the Environment and Waste Management Committee, she brought forward several sustainability initiatives. Ms. Sawicki was also a Member of the Greater Vancouver

Regional District Waste and Environment Committee, and served on the Burnaby Hospital Board, as well as the Metropolitan Board of Health.

On March 17, 1992, at the first sitting of the 35th Parliament of British Columbia, Ms. Sawicki was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and served in that capacity until March 1994. She then served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, responsible for the Georgia Basin Initiative from April 1994 to May 1996.

Ms. Sawicki is on the Advisory Committee of the Sharing Our Future Foundation (Burnaby Association for the Mentally Handicapped), an Honorary Patron of Musica Victoria, and Adjudication Panelist for Go Green's Air Quality Awards and a member of several other community-based organizations. □

...and Deputy Minister!



*Derek Thompson
Deputy Minister of Environment,
Lands and Parks*

Derek Thompson was born in Wales and later raised in England.

Mr. Thompson has worked for the provincial government of British Columbia since 1973, and has served at the executive level for the past five years. From 1994 to 1999, he was responsible for establishing and managing the Land Use Coordination Office which has a mandate to coordinate the province's strategic land use planning program. He chaired the inter-ministry Deputy Ministers' Committee on Land Use which dealt with all cross-ministry land use initiatives and reported to the Cabinet Committee for Environment and Land Use.

In 1998, at the request of the provincial government he assumed the role of independent Commissioner for the Special Environmental Review of the Skytrain expansion project, a \$1.2 billion transit initiative in Greater Vancouver.

Prior to these appointments, he worked in the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks from 1973 to 1994, principally in provincial parks planning. As Director of Planning and Conservation in BC Parks, he was responsible for

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Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is November 1, 1999.

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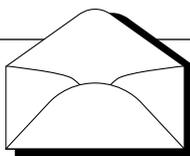
Joan Sawicki

Deputy Minister

Derek Thompson

Assistant Deputy Minister

Denis O'Gorman



Letters

Hello!

My summer has just slipped by ... and I wanted to thank your organization for a very special day that we partook in.

I brought a few friends and my nine-year old son to your "Canada's Parks Day" (July 17). We enjoyed ourselves tremendously and were never bored. My son was appreciative of all he learned that day. I was impressed by the way Jennifer and her team got all involved in a fun and learning way.

See you next year at Porpoise Bay!

Sincerely, Nicolem Belanger King, Sechelt

(Editor's note: The 'Jennifer' to which the letter referred is Jennifer Yakinishyn, Porpoise Bay Park Interpreter)

("...Deputy Minister" continued from page 1)

planning and natural resource management within over 400 provincial parks and 131 ecological reserves covering 6.6 million hectares (13 million acres).

Between 1989 and 1992, he taught a 4th year course in wilderness management as a sessional lecturer at the University of Victoria, School of Environmental Studies.

He has served as chair or project leader in numerous strategic initiatives of government, including, Chair, Conservation of Areas Team on the Provincial Old Growth Strategy and leader of the Provincial Parks and Wilderness for the Nineties program.

He has an MA in Geography from the University of Victoria and over 20 years experience working in planning and conflict resolution in the natural resources field. Derek Thompson's commitment is to improve public accountability and responsiveness in planning natural resources. In 1992, he received the Federal/Provincial Parks Councils' Merit Award in recognition of his contribution to parks and conservation. He received this award a second time in 1998 in recognition of his work on land use planning.

Derek and his wife, Carol, have been married 27 years and have one married son, Bryn. □

Conservation and Cooperation BC Parks and Sargeant Bay Society

by John Newell, Garibaldi Sunshine Coast District

The principal feature of Sargeant Bay Provincial Park is a fresh-water wetland, protected by a barrier beach. Were it not for the efforts of the Sargeant Bay Society, it is likely that this ecosystem, unique on the Sunshine Coast, would have been lost to commercial development. Work towards building a marina at Sargeant Bay began in 1977, when the landowner diverted the mouth of Colvin Creek into a channel dredged through the barrier berm. This development would probably have gone ahead but for the intervention of a small group of local residents who formed the nucleus of what later became the Sargeant Bay Society. Over the next dozen years, the Society strenuously resisted increasingly ambitious plans for marina, condominium and townhouse developments that would have destroyed the marsh and its surroundings, while promoting its acquisition for parkland. Its efforts were crowned with success when the province bought the land covering the foreshore, wetland and lower Colvin Creek valley late in 1989.

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("Conservation..." continued from page 2)

The Society immediately changed gear to work closely with BC Parks towards rehabilitation of the wetland. The first priority was the removal of old buildings, rusting earth-moving machinery and other garbage from the beach berm. Major work on rehabilitation of the wetland was undertaken in the summer of 1991, following approval of more than \$23,000 in grants from federal and provincial governments. The channel dredged through the berm was filled and the tidal flat it had created was excavated to form a small lake with an island to provide sanctuary for nesting waterfowl. A fish ladder was installed where Colvin Creek originally discharged into the bay, restoring the creek's potential as Coho spawning habitat. Volunteers cleaned up the lower reaches of the creek, removing old plastic and metal piping that had once supplied water to the cabin on the berm. Work contributed by members of the Society almost doubled the value of the completed project. A year later, Chum and Coho salmon had successfully spawned in the creek and 70 plant species were already established on the man-made island in the lake.

A second access trail to the beach was built in 1993 and a trail along Colvin Creek, in the upland area of the park, sponsored by the Society and funded by a federal government job creation program, was completed the following year. It was later extended to Triangle Lake, in the upper part of the Sargeant Bay watershed. In 1996, eight years of lobbying for protection of this small, pristine lake and its surrounding sphagnum bog were finally rewarded; the area covering both the lake and access trail was incorporated in the park, more than doubling its size.

The Society's main objectives had now been accomplished but, in close cooperation with BC Parks, it continues to exercise stewardship over the area it worked so hard to protect. Invasive Scotch Broom has been eliminated from the beach berm, but the battle with Himalayan Blackberries, begun in 1997, continues annually. The Society has arranged for spring clean-up of fallen trees and clearing blocked culverts along the trails; beach clean-up by volunteers and nearby Halfmoon Bay Elementary School is done as necessary. Attempts to dissuade beaver from damming Colvin Creek have been abandoned as concerns that this would prevent salmon from reaching the spawning beds have proved to be unfounded. Only Chum cannot negotiate the dams; Coho have spawned in the creek every year.

The Society has prepared regular reports on the progression of plant and wildlife species in the wetland since the rehabilitation project was completed. At last count some 130 plant species had been documented on the island in Colvin Lake alone, and a number of bird species, rare to uncommon on the Sunshine Coast, have been seen regularly in the marsh, including Wood Duck, Green Heron and Pied-billed Grebe. In 1999, the Society, together with BC Parks, the Sechelt First Nation, the Sunshine Coast Regional District, and several federal and provincial conservation agencies, participated in a "Wetland Celebration" attended by 1100 elementary school children. It is hoped that, like other more modest educational initiatives organized by the Society, this too will become an annual event.

The Sargeant Bay experience provides an exemplary lesson of what can be accomplished through cooperation between BC Parks and local conservation groups. □



Sargeant Bay Provincial Park Beach and Wetland.

Bushfire '99

Flammable Australia: Fire Regimes and Biodiversity of a Continent

*by Judy Millar, Exchange Ranger
(British Columbia)*

An exodus of National Parks and Wildlife, South Australia staff occurred in July. We braved the long drive to Albury to attend the Bushfire '99 conference. We drove out of the Adelaide, green and vibrant, along the mallee-lined highway, past orchards and orange groves skirting the Mighty Murray. The only visible wildlife was the occasional kookaburra, sitting on the utility lines.

Albury is a quaint town situated on the Victoria-New South Wales's border. It is the meeting place of the Murray and the Australian Alps. The scenery is fabulous with hills covered in Eucalypt and vineyards.

The conference composed a series of short papers delivered by experts in various fields on the theme of "Flammable Australia": the Fire Regimes and Biodiversity of a Continent.

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("Bush Fire '99" continued from page 3)

Two papers that I felt were of particular interest both for South Australia and British Columbia, were "The Role of Indicators in Developing Appropriate Fire Regimes" and "Management of Fire for the Conservation of Biodiversity".

To quote from the first paper, "The ecological effects of fire are many and complex and it is highly unlikely that they will ever be well understood for all organisms and ecosystems. This reality is sometimes used by management agencies to justify passive management, which often results in undesirable social consequences such as devastating wildfires. We believe that, in the absence of perfect knowledge, certain key information, or indicators... can be used to devise fire management strategies to achieve positive ecological and social outcomes. These factors are intrinsically linked so fire regime patterns or consistencies can be expected to emerge."

This paper outlined how these indicators can be used to develop appropriate fire regimes, relating to jarrah forests but the principles are transferable to other ecosystem types.

In the second paper, I was most impressed with the planning structure and processes that have been developed in Victoria. Gordon Friend, presenter of the paper, highlighted the need to "... be fully aware of the ecological basis and need for ecological burning, know what information and resources are needed to plan ecological burns, have a structured framework in place to gather and interpret this data in order to implement burns and understand their responsibilities and those of others."

Most importantly and probably the most difficult task facing resource and park managers is "to set clear objectives and a process to implement ecological burning".

Friend emphasizes that progress in this monumental endeavour

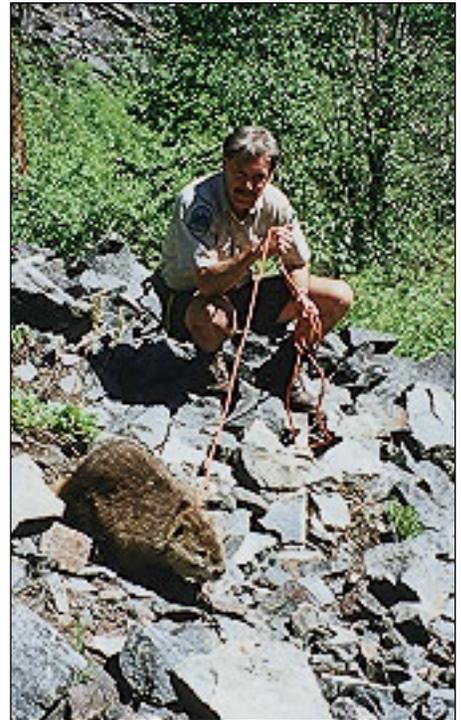
can only be realized through the "learning by doing" approach and that, "cross-business and cross-agency integrated approach" is essential for success.

I learned that Victoria has a commitment to Fire Management. It has resourced the program with planners and has taken up the challenge to progress to the implementation stage of the process. The planning procedure is advanced and very practical. The issues are being systematically examined and documented. Workshops, committees and data management are coordinated. Victoria Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria have adopted a very good system, which can be used as a template for other agencies and states.

The challenges are to organize a state/provincial planning process, complete comprehensive fire management plans with clearly identified objectives for priority areas, determine those areas that will benefit ecologically from fire and then to implement prescribed fire effectively and efficiently.

Program limitations in both British Columbia and South Australia include the commitment of ongoing resources, gaps in information, coordination of academics and management, perceived conflict between land uses, advanced training and experience for staff and lack of public/political support.

Our advantages are that we have access to technologically advanced computer systems, a growing biodiversity and fire effects database, current research, inter-state and international exchange of information and motivated/enthusiastic personnel. □



Kootenay Kowboy, Mike Gall, after the round-up with his 'catch'.

Kootenay Kowboy Gets His Man (Sort of)

by Jack Paterson, Kootenay District

During a recent field trip to the Moyie Lake Provincial Park a distraught tourist informed Area Supervisor Jack Paterson and Resource Officer Mike Gall of a bear that had fallen into a hole and couldn't get out. Upon investigating this incident it was discovered that it wasn't, in fact, a bear at all – it was two beavers. The beavers had entered a very deep, steep-sided hole which had filled up with water during the spring run off. The hole was approximately five meters deep and with the water now receding, it left the beavers high and dry. Unfortunately one of the beavers had perished and it appears that the strong one was living off its mate.

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("Kootenay Kowboy..." continued from page 4)
The challenge now was how to get a very angry beaver up out of the hole, or do we allow nature to take its course? Well we in the Kootenays are always ready for a challenge so with some quick material gathering (one long stick and a lariat made from a 20 foot electrical extension cord) the round-up started. After a couple of attempts the swift, but some what rusty, Kootenay Kowboy, Mike Gall, finally succeed in placing a noose around the neck and front paw of this angry varmint.

With the skill and grace of an old cowhand he quickly brought the beaver to the surface where he was confronted with the problem of how to get a beaver released from the end of your lariat extension cord. Fortunately for Mike this beaver was one tired critter and was more concerned about getting to the river than taking on the Kootenay Kowboy. As we watched the beaver swim off into the sunset the Kootenay Kowboy was heard saying "you can lead a beaver to water but you can't make him drink!" □

The Magic of Murtle

by Ray Peterson, Lower Mainland District

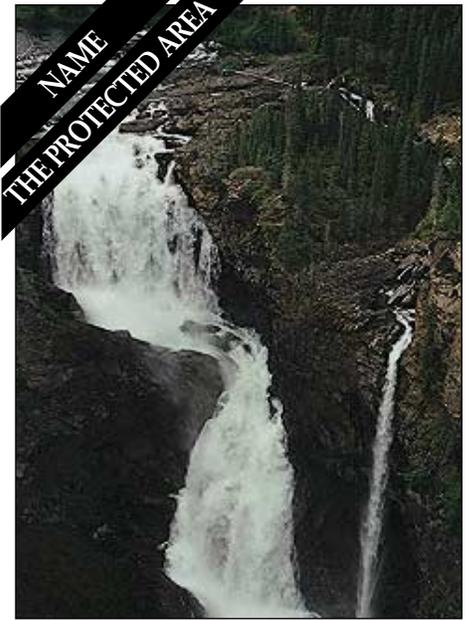
My first experience at Murtle Lake in Wells Gray Provincial Park was quite a few years ago when I worked for Monty Downs and was Acting Manager of the park. Chris Kissinger invited me up there when a newer boat was being flown in for the Park Rangers. After a quick tour around the lake, I could feel the magic of this special place and vowed to return with my family. For five of the past six years I have spent a week at Murtle Lake with family and friends. This year was no exception and even my 76-year old Dad came with us for the third time.

Each year we have met the Murtle Lake Park Rangers who have been very polite and professional. They do a commendable job of conserving this spectacular wilderness and are great ambassadors for BC Parks.

It is amazing how a week in a special place like this, away from all the modern annoyances and conveniences, remind people just how special our parks system is. □



Park Rangers Rebecca Lambert and Mike Friars.



High mountains, wide forested river valleys, a spectacular waterfall, Stone sheep, timber wolf, guide outfitting activities, and rolling alpine define this protected area.

Mountain Trails and River Valleys

by Roger Norrish, Victoria

One of the newest protected areas, this park was established in June 1999. This vast protected area, covering 99,904 hectares, lies northwest of Fort St. John in the Peace River country of northeast British Columbia. The park was identified as a future protected area during the Fort St. John and Fort Nelson LRMP processes. Should you travel to the park, one natural feature you will want to see is the large waterfall located in the extreme south-east corner of the park. This provincial Class A park is a genuine wilderness. Here you will likely see elk, moose and, if you scan the mountain peaks carefully, Stone sheep. The area now contained in the provincial park has long been a popular hunting and horse-riding destination. The main lake in the park is named after the wife of Canada's seventh Prime Minister; the first French Canadian elected to this office. What is the name of this protected area? And what river forms a part of the east boundary of the park? (Answers on page 8). □

Don and Mike Save a Bear

Planner with a Gun – Operation Officer’s Worst Nightmare

by Chris Hamilton, Cariboo District

It was a warm sunny morning in the Cariboo Mountains, the first after weeks of rain, gray skies and cold weather. Don Olesiuk, the Area Supervisor for the North Cariboo, Mike Woodruff, Don’s Senior Ranger and I had arrived at the headquarters cabin at Bowron Lake the previous night so we could get an early start for a long day of visiting several study areas located far back in the mountains.

We piled in the Planning Suburban with our large lunches, maps and bear spray and headed back into the mountains on a old logging road, glad that the huge snowfalls and wet weather had delayed the end of spring breakup and the inevitable heavy logging truck traffic. We drove for several hours, stopping to look at Cariboo River Park and then taking a lunch break at the old forestry campsite at Ghost Lake in Cariboo Mountains Park. After lunch and a quick cleanup of the site we were back on the road, looking for the Grizzly Lake study area. After poking around in the wrong area for half an hour, we finally found the lake, which is believed to have a population of high elevation char unique to the region.

After about an hour of exploring the Grizzly Lake area and taking pictures, we went back to the Suburban. Our next stop was to be Maeford Lake, another high elevation, picturesque little lake with unique limestone rock formations. Rounding a corner, we caught sight of a big black bear on the side of the road. She stood up on her back legs and stared at us for about half a minute then dropped back down, but only moved a short distance off the road into the heavy alder. We drove slowly past, stopping about ten meters past where she left the road, hoping for another glimpse.

We could hear her moving about in the underbrush. It was then that we heard a strange and horrible noise coming from the area she was moving around in. My first thought was that the bear had somehow grabbed a small child. We turned the engine off to listen more closely. The sound became more plaintive and hideous. Thinking that maybe the mother bear had treed her cubs, we backed the truck up, peering into the bush. We then saw the source of the awful crying: a small bear cub was hanging by its paw in a tree, arm caught in a trap.



The small bear cub, hanging by its paw in a tree, arm caught in a trap.

The little cub was about six feet up the tree, his paw firmly caught in a marten trap, which consisted of an eight inch square box that is open on

the bottom and has wire mesh on the top. The trap, which was supposed to be removed by the trapper in early spring, takes advantage of the natural curiosity of the mink-like marten, who sticks his head in the box to investigate. The steel trap on a length of chain inside the box snaps onto his head, breaking the neck. Unfortunately, the bear cub suffered from the same natural curiosity of the marten.

While the little cub dangled by his paw from the trap and hollered, we could see the mother about 15 meters back in the brush, standing up and looking very agitated. At this point Don and Mike got out of the suburban with bear spray in hand, trying to keep an eye on mom. After a brief discussion of our limited options, Don declared “I’m going to get the cub out of the trap.” Questioning the wisdom of his decision, I kept an eye on the mother bear while Don put on his gloves. Mike grabbed the rifle and put a shell in the chamber. As Don approached the cub, the little bear began to cry louder and defecate in fear. Mike and I tried to keep the mother bear in sight, who was standing up, turning circles and looking very distraught.

After several minutes of watching Don wrestling with the awkward trap in one hand and fighting the teeth and claws of the young bear in the other, Mike decided it was a two person job. Handing me the gun, Mike grabbed a black plastic bag from the suburban. He placed the bag over the cub’s head, which somewhat quieted the shrieking animal. The mother bear was up on her back legs again and was starting to move towards us. Don yelled at her, and she dropped back into the underbrush. We had now lost sight of the mother in the dense brush. I

(Continued on page 7) ►

("Don and Mike..." continued from page 6)
was scanning the brush all around us, rifle in hand, trying to locate the mother while Don and Mike were sparring with the crying, defecating bear cub. After what seemed like an eternity, but was probably closer to a couple of minutes, the bear cub was loose. Don held the writhing cub up and excitedly said "take a picture!" Flustered, I said that in order to pick up the camera, I would have to put

the gun down, and knowing there was a mother bear somewhere in the underbrush around us, there was no way I would do that!

Don let the squirming bear down and pointed it in the direction of his mother. The cub walked off with a bit of a swagger to the nearest tree and ran up, looking back at us. Thinking twice, he quickly ran back down the tree and into the bush towards where his mother had disappeared. He was

not limping, so we assumed the trap had not done any permanent damage.

We decided it would be a good time to leave the area, so we jumped back into the Suburban and continued on to Maeford Lake. Somehow, however, discussing the relative merits of another study area seemed a great deal less interesting than reliving the courage of Don and Mike in saving the bear cub. □

The Birth of a Decorator Crab

by Miracle Beach Nature House Staff

It's a boy!! It's a girl!! It's about 2,000,000 of each!!

The Miracle Beach Nature House is proud to announce that earlier this summer, one of our Decorator Crabs gave birth to four or five million babies (give or take a few).

One morning, as we were checking up on all our animals, we noticed that the large Decorator Crab was looking as though her abdomen was sticking out. Upon closer observation, we discovered that she was carrying eggs. This crab was immediately placed in an isolation tank in order to protect her and the baby crabs. Sure enough, at about two o'clock that very afternoon, we noticed that she was bracing her legs against the side of the tank and we all gathered around to watch.

All female crabs have a kind of beehive shape to their abdomen, and this part of her abdomen was now sticking out about three centimetres. Inside her abdomen are her pleopods, which look like gills, and the eggs are kept there, attached to the pleopods until they have hatched and are big enough to swim away. As we watched, she started pumping her abdomen in and out, as if she were flexing her muscles. It looked like an accordion. She would extend it and then quickly pull it back towards her body, and as she did this, hundreds of tiny, almost microscopic babies swam out.

She continued doing this for about three hours until all the babies were out and swimming freely. The baby crabs were almost transparent and looked nothing like a crab. They just had a head and a tail. Now that the baby crabs are born, they will become part of the zooplankton swimming in the water, and food for many animals, including barnacles. Those lucky enough to survive, will grow legs and a hard carapace, or shell, within two years. Then they will start to look and behave like very small decorator crabs.

The mother is still with us, and doing fine. The babies were released

into the ocean two days after their birth, so that they will get the right kind of food, and be able to grow in a natural environment. Out of the four or five million baby crabs that were born, only about 20 or 30 will live long enough to reach the size of their mother (about 18 centimetres including her legs). The rest, at some point in their life cycle, will be eaten by other animals. We wish the new crabs well in our ocean, and hope to see one or two of them return to the Nature House in about 10 years time! □



A Decorator Crab at Miracle Beach Nature House gives birth to four or five million babies.

Duck Before You Sit

by Helen Farrer, Cariboo District

A funny thing happened during a trip to the outhouse in Sunset View Campground at Green Lake Provincial Park the other day. A park visitor was using the facility when all of a sudden a funny noise came from down below. At first she thought she must have been imagining things so she ignored the sound. However, when she returned to the outhouse for a second trip and heard the noise again, she knew it must be something indeed!

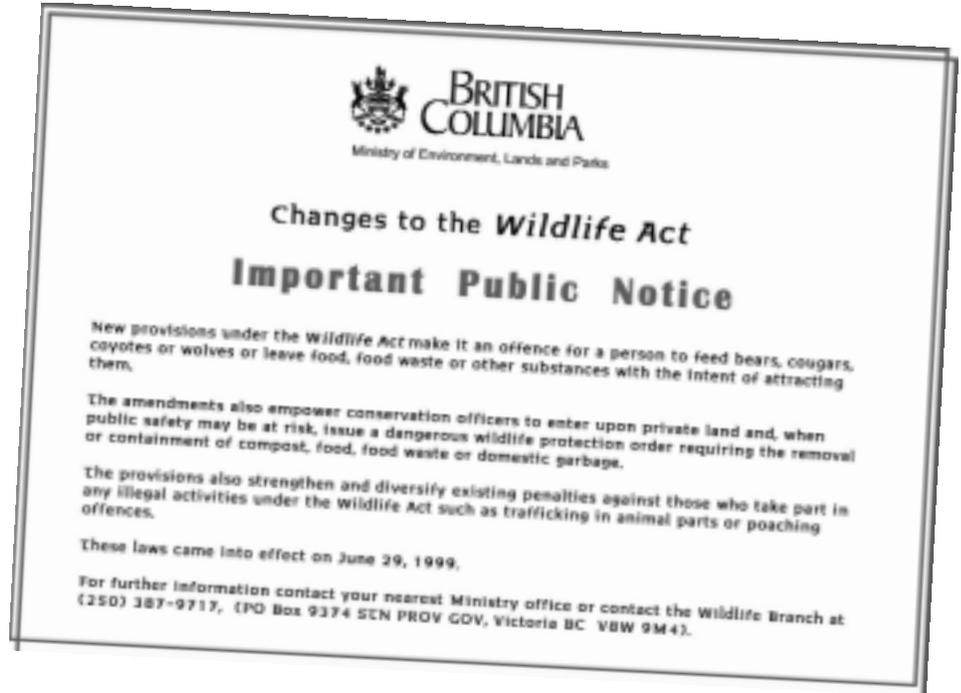
Now, this park visitor had a husband who didn't always believe his wife so when she told him the story of the strange noise in the outhouse hole, he simply nodded and said "yes, dear". Not being satisfied with his response, she invoked the help of the Park Hosts, Lucille and Doug Folland, to verify her tale.

Being a keenly curious person, Lucille accompanied the women to the outhouse to view the situation and sure enough, the noise continued. Lucille then sought help from the park operator's staff from Sunset View Campground, Bev and Fred Simpson.

With flashlight in hand, Bev and Fred ventured forth to look down the outhouse hole to determine once and for all if there was cause for concern. What they saw down below amazed them as two tiny eyes stared back up at them. What on earth could that be and better yet, how did it ever get down there?!!

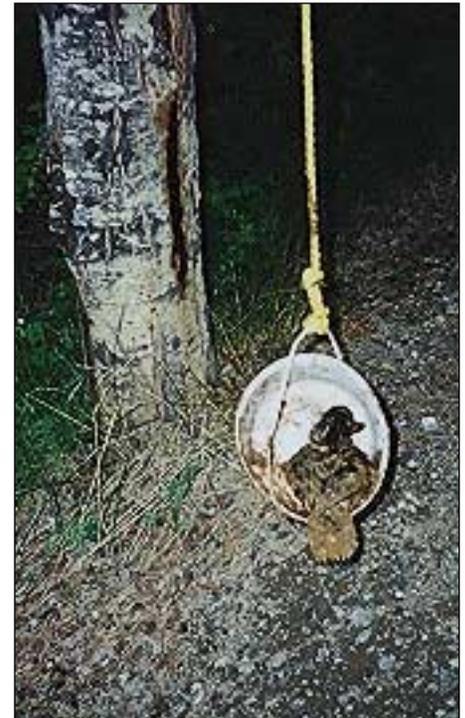
So off they went to fetch a pail and rope to try their hand at fishing out the unfortunate animal. By this time a crowd had gathered around the outhouse to see what the commotion was all about. Comments and suggestions poured forth as Bev and Fred fished away.

Changes to the Wildlife Act



After several failed attempts their efforts were rewarded and up came the maker of the noise. To everyone's surprise it was a very dirty (if you can imagine after hours in an outhouse hole) Teal duck! Bev and Fred carefully washed off the duck (several times!) and released it into the lake. A very grateful and confused duck swam away into the sunset, bringing to end a most amazing story.

If anyone has ever met Lucille Folland, one would know that this woman could spin a yarn as well as the next great storyteller. So when Lucille recounted the story of the strange noise in the outhouse hole to me in its entirety, I wondered how much yarn was involved. Turns out, the story is the truth as the picture bears witness! □



An unexpected outhouse rescue.

Answers (from page 5): The protected area is Graham-Laurier Provincial Park. The Graham River defines a short length of the park's east boundary.

NAME THE PROTECTED AREA: