

1. The BC govt has officially killed the goal of making a world class rails to trails network with no motorized recreational activities like cycling, horse back riding, hiking, walking & cross country skiing. It's a network that's part of the Trans Canada Trail, covers 550k of former rail corridors including the Kootenai Valley Railway and the Burnson to Midway, Shuswap Valley, and (long) Trail and the Columbia & Western Rail Trail from Midway to Castlegar.

The province simply lacks resources to police such corridors & keep motorized vehicles out such as ATV's dirt bikes, 4x4's, and snow mobiles; and there isn't universal support among the communities along the corridor. It's a blow to groups that have labored and worked at trail building & creating a non motorized corridor as BC's contribution to the Trans Canada Trail.

The govt's decision is good news to the motorized sector who argue that their members have a long history of use for the corridor and there's been no legislation to keep them off. The head of the Quad Riders Assoc. of BC says it's important that they require access to sections of the rail corridors to reach other interconnecting resource roads. Besides noise, dust pollution & safety, motorized vehicles are to blame for churning up the rail corridors to the point that cyclists avoid them altogether, but the ATV people say it helps to compact trail corridors and they work on their maintenance, by default the motorized recreation is taking over. The BCAA, interim president of Trails Society of BC said there has been some success with opposing groups working together in the Chehalis River Valley so some areas are off-limits to motorized access. It was Gordon Campbell who adopted a non-motorized policy but he had never consulted the affected communities, some of which get revenues from ATV's & other motorized sectors.

2 Decline in forests

A new report claims that the biggest problem of the degradation in the forests is in Canada not in Southern Countries like Brazil. Canada is No 1 in the world for the total loss of intact forest landscape since 2000, mainly because of logging fires & energy and industrial development. There is no political will at the federal & prov levels for conserving primary forest. Most logging done in Canada is still in virgin forest. If this rate of degradation continues as usual it will lead to destruction of most remaining intact forests. ^{this century} Dr Nigel Sizer director of the Forest program at the World Resources Institute, said. They have discovered that the rate of decline is accelerating, with more than 104 M.H lost from 2000-2013 that's about 8.1% of global undisturbed forest. There is huge degradation of boreal forest all across Canada. The boreal forest in the area of the oil sands between Ft Mc Murray & Lake Athabasca has been totally devastated. Parks like Alberta's Wood Buffalo, Ontario's Algonquin Park & Assiniboine national reserve in (Beau) Quebec have not been spared. Fire historically were the natural source of regeneration in the boreal forest, but Peter Lee of Forest Watch Canada blames climate change for the recent increase in pace and intensity of forest fires in Canada.

3 Beginnings of BC Parks

Bill Merillies recently told of the timeline of the start of nature interpretation in BC's provincial parks. The formal beginning of this took place June 29, 1957, when the first nature house, a canvas wall tent opened to the public in Nanmoing Prov Park. The idea of this came much earlier with Ontario's interpretation Program in Algonquin Park in 1944. In BC in the 1950's the responsibility for provincial parks was with the economic Division of BC Forest Service, but this attitude changed in 1952 when a Canadian Institute of Forestry meeting in Montreal, where



Deputy Minister of Forests CD Oudard addresses the BC's Forest Service's role in the field of preservation. He stated it was to develop & manage an integrated and co-ordinated park system capable of meeting public needs and it should include areas of scientific or cultural interest preserving historic, prehistoric, archaeological or geological features, or interesting flora & fauna. On how to put community park heritage values to the public 3 people stand out - Chess Lyons, Bob Broadhead, & York Edwards. Their initiatives & energy would lead to implementation of separate programs focused on these subjects. At this time the major provincial initiative was the construction of the Hope-Princeton Highway and they were to make this more interesting & attractive to the motoring public. Parks staff were told to identify features of interest - The Quaternary trail, the stand of Pacific Rhododendrons, the big burn of 1945, mountain goats on Skagit Bluffs, the enormous Douglas firs and western red cedars, along the Sumalla R, opportunities to see mule deer & black bears, and the Beaver Ponds; these were all thought to be good. Donald Smith from Ontario was here as also BC's first seasonal naturalist together with Raymond Barne of Victoria. They set up a wall tent erected over wooden floor & frame as the first Manning Park Nature house. The first exhibit's purpose was to generate interest & encourage visitors to step outside, take a walk & enjoy the real thing! They exhibited, gave information, direction, & to educate so that the park became a special place to whom their lives will never be the same again. Within a week of this tent opening 1000 people came thro and they could measure what the people thought of it from the visitors book - showing that park interest was great! It's said that usually the beginning of many organizations are characterized by energetic dedication. In 1957 Freeman Tilden published his book "Interpreting Our Heritage".

To-day a classic reference to all interpreters, In 1958, BC Parks interpretation program expanded at Nanaimo, the Nature House was doubled to 2 tents facing each other with a fly covering connecting the breezeway. With more staff they were then able to diversify & could take Nature trails with signs identifying flora & fauna & other natural features etc. It was thought that Edward Fyfe had given more thought than any other Canadian to the question of nature interpretation in parks. He is now recognized as BC's "Father of Interpretation" He said interpretation actually interprets things seen, heard, smelled & felt like a tree, a birds call, flower perfume or rough surface (leaf). The best interpretation comes from a skilled & informed person; at its best it offers revelation! Of course Fyfe like Ches Lyons, Bob Broadland & others under the leadership of Cy Oldham; BC Parks earned a reputation as being one of World's best park systems (in the world) during the 60's. Let's strive to keep that reputation.

4. Aquatic issues -

While research in BC has come a long way from the time Fisheries & Oceans mounted a 50-caliber machine gun at Seymour Narrows to shoot orcas to save salmon for anglers. To-day they're doing all they can to save the population. ^{Prof} Ford who heads the Fisheries & Oceans Cetacean Research program at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo has written a book describing BC's rich & stunning variety of mammals in the coastal waters - called "Marine Mammals of BC" has taken him 15 yrs - It's a hard work, field guide & reference book. He says the last whaling station closed in 1957 at Coal Harbour on ^{Nanaimo} ~~Nanaimo~~ Island and since then they have shown signs of recovering, but some still struggle to survive. The blue, humpback, fin & sei whales were all hunted off the BC coast and only the humpback has shown signs of recovery.

If we want to save the killer whale out there, the

areas, we need to make sure the marine ecosystem
is intact & that there's enough chinook salmon for
them, that there's enough (herring) prey for the whales,
& small herring and so on for the chinook salmon.

There are 31 marine mammal species in BC.

That's 1/4 of all marine mammal species known
in the world.

Rest of page is left blank intentionally



The dwindling caribou pop.

The ministry of Forest, Land & Natural Resources Operations is looking for 2 teams to look into moose mortality. One will pilot a helicopter into the wild northeast of BC to capture & radio collar 60 female moose, the other to conduct a follow up investigation. - the ministry is hoping to find out how a dwindling caribou pop in the area might be related to a rise in a wolf pop - by looking at the abundance and distribution of the moose, a similar species to caribou, and a primary food for wolves. Several caribou are designated as "threatened" according to federal species-at-risk and are on the red list. Chris Ritchie ministry manager of fish & wildlife recovery implementation says they're dying because of predation and they think it's because of wolves. So they want to manage the habitat and manage the caribou & moose & their wildlife that's influencing the caribou.

They require a team to provide a helicopter, a net gun, & radio - telemetry receiver while the ministry will provide GPS radio-collars and cut tags. The team will look into the deaths of radio-collared moose and remove the collars which will be monitored by a third party that tells the ministry about the signs of death. They'll have to get blood, hair and fecal samples from each moose inject an anti-inflammatory drug into animals and complete a moose capture form.

This data will help the ministry to decide how to manage caribou survival as part of the Boreal Caribou implementation plan. It could be a dangerous project because there's a person strapped to the helicopter hanging out by a tether & shooting a net gun over a moose which wouldn't be very happy. There's a worker safety issue but they also want to make sure animals are treated safely. They're encouraging first nations participation. The project is

a collaboration between University of Northern BC in Prince Rupert & other agencies. Monitoring of moose in BC is not considered a factor because there's no season on caribou