



CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

SOUTHERN ALBERTA CHAPTER

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In this Issue

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE • 3

WHY CPAWS SOUTHERN ALBERTA? WE ARE THE PARKS PEOPLE

By Anne-Marie Syslak - Executive Director, CPAWS SAB

CONSERVATION UPDATE • 4

WILDLIFE PROTECTION STARTS WITH THE CASTLE

By Katie Morrison - Conservation Director, CPAWS SAB

CONSERVATION UPDATE • 5

MALIGNE LAKE OVERNIGHT PLAN A STEP TOO FAR

By Alison Ronson - Executive Director, CPAWS NAB

EDUCATION UPDATE • 6

TEN IS A MAGIC NUMBER FOR PROGRESS

By Anne-Marie Syslak - Executive Director, CPAWS SAB

FEATURE • 7

DONOR PROFILE: BOB MORGAN

By Ericka Rau - Communications and Outreach Coordinator, CPAWS SAB

FEATURE • 8 & 9

HIKING GUIDE INSPIRED BY MAGIC MOMENTS IN NATURE

Interview with Alex Mowat - CPAWS SAB Hiking Guide

Written by Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member

PARKS UPDATE • 10

CELEBRATING VICTORIES IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS

By Anne-Marie Syslak - Executive Director, CPAWS SAB and Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member with information from Parks Canada

PARKS UPDATE • 11

GLENBOW RANCH: A FASCINATING TIME CAPSULE

By Kirsten Olson - Office and Fund Program Administrator CPAWS SAB

FEATURE • 12

A MAGICAL LIFE IN MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

By Max Winkler

FEATURE • 13

WOLVES IN THE WILD DELIVER A MEMORABLE MOMENT

By Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member

FEATURE • 14

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR NATURE IS STRONG

By Éric Hébert-Daly - National Executive Director, CPAWS

FEATURE • 14 & 15

OUR CHAPTER HAS A RECORD OF SUCCESS

By Kirsten Olson - Office and Fund Program Administrator CPAWS SAB

Photo: Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition

WHY CPAWS SOUTHERN ALBERTA? WE ARE THE PARKS PEOPLE



**By Anne-Marie Syslak,
Executive Director,
CPAWS SAB**

As our name implies, “parks” is at the heart of who we are and what we do.

The Southern Alberta chapter was one of the first regional chapters for CPAWS. It was established in 1967, and a few years later a group of volunteers came together to help save Lake Louise from a proposed massive

infrastructure development to support a bid for the Olympic Games. Using science as a foundation, the group rallied as the voice for wilderness in the park.

That defining moment shaped CPAWS SAB as the watchdog organization for our Rocky Mountain national parks and we slowly expanded our scope to provincial public lands. Our work, in co-ordination with like-minded friends resulted in the expansion of our provincial park network to include the establishment of the Elbow-Sheep, Bow Valley, Whaleback and Spray Valley parks.

Throughout the years, we have stopped harmful development (Wind Valley), and have been part of significant conservation

efforts (wildlife crossing structures in Banff National Park, Banff-Bow Valley Study). We have influenced policy: getting ecological integrity recognized as the first priority in the National Parks Act, getting grizzly bears listed as threatened under species at risk regulations, and stopping Bill 29, legislation tabled in 2010 that would have weakened the Provincial Parks Act.

In 1997, we expanded our scope into the field of education, recognizing that a knowledgeable engaged citizenry is fundamental to conservation. Our education department delivers programs to thousands of students, teachers and adults annually and won a prestigious Alberta Emerald award in 2008. We are the only CPAWS chapter to have such a well-established school program.

This edition of the newsletter focuses on parks. It includes stories of our work past and present, recollections from CPAWS-SAB members, including a retired warden, and aims to give you a taste about who we are and what we do. I hope it inspires readers to get engaged because we are all about our parks, our health and our future.

Why CPAWS? We are the Parks People and will continue to stand on guard to protect, properly manage and grow our parks and wilderness resources in Canada.

Yours in conservation,
Anne-Marie

Photo: Audrey Parnell



WILDLIFE PROTECTION STARTS WITH THE CASTLE



**By Katie Morrison,
Conservation Director,
CPAWS SAB**

Protected areas are a vital part of conserving natural areas and biodiversity. We need them now more than ever.

A new report from the World Wildlife Fund indicates that population sizes of vertebrate

species—mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish—have declined by more than half over the last 40 years.

Arresting this alarming decline depends on establishing a network of connected reserves, ecological science has shown. These reserves act as a source for plant and animal populations and as a benchmark to assess the management of lands outside of protected areas. Thus, establishing and managing protected areas remains a principal approach of virtually all conservation strategies.

Protected areas are also beneficial to people living in or near protected areas and people living further away. Protected areas offer opportunities for recreation and spiritual renewal, genetic potential of wild species, and protection of environmental services, such as water, clean air and adaptation to climate change.

Parks also contribute to people's livelihoods, particularly at the local level. In the western United States, regions with large areas of protected land have enjoyed three to four times the

economic growth over the last two decades as regions without protected areas.

Recent science indicates that we need to protect and connect at least half of our lands and waters to maintain ecosystem and biodiversity services essential both for human health and species conservation. These targets are far above Alberta's protected areas targets. Despite the fact that southern Alberta contains 80 per cent of the province's species at risk, less than two per cent of many of our natural ecological subregions are protected.

The final land-use plan for southern Alberta, the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), was released in July and sets the direction for conservation and development of southern Alberta for the next 50 years. Although small steps were made, overall the plan failed to put protection in place to ensure we maintain the important natural functions of this region, protect our species at risk and care for our valuable headwaters.

CPAWS SAB pushed for protection of the entire Castle wilderness in the plan. Although it added parts of the Castle to the protected areas system, most of the new protected area lies high above tree line, and approximately half of the Castle area is left unprotected. As one of the most species-rich areas in the province, the entire area badly needs protection as a wildland park to conserve Alberta's biodiversity, water and recreation values.

The SSRP consistently designated only areas above tree line in the new protected areas created in the Eastern Slopes. Additionally, other than the successful new Pekisko Heritage Rangeland, no new grasslands areas were protected.

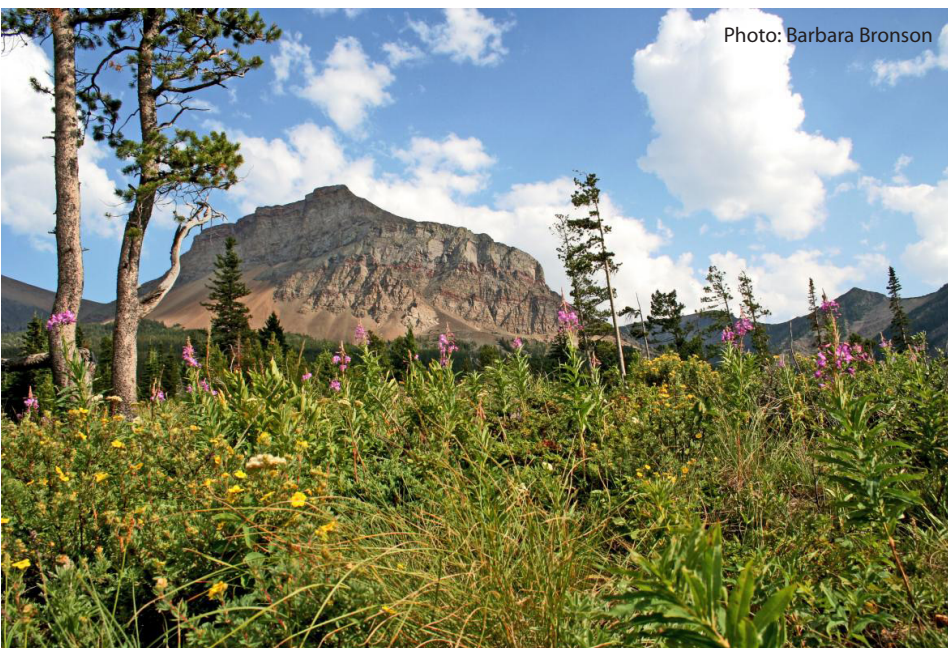


Photo: Barbara Bronson

Ecological science suggests we must first protect our most diverse and special areas, then determine appropriate activities and conservation tools on other public lands. Instead of doing that, the SSRP protects only those lands that are not "useful" to clear-cut logging, oil and gas exploration, roads, unregulated motorized vehicle use or random camping. This amounts to conservation by default rather than conservation by design.

To protect our way of life and prosperity, we need to recognize the importance of protected areas in southern Alberta and promote legislated protection of our most valuable resources - clean water, a diversity of species, open rangelands and spectacular wilderness areas - through the creation of protected areas. That starts with the Castle wilderness.

MALIGNE LAKE OVERNIGHT PLAN A STEP TOO FAR



**By Alison Ronson
Executive Director,
CPAWS NAB**

When is enough truly enough? CPAWS has been concerned for several years now about the increasing trend of allowing built infrastructure and commercial

developments in our Rocky Mountain National Parks.

From the via ferrata at Mount Norquay in Banff National Park to the Glacier Skywalk in Jasper National Park, these developments not only have the potential to harm sensitive environments in the parks, but also force park visitors to pay commercial operators for experiences that were once free and accessible for all. In July, Parks Canada released its decision relating to the proposed resort development at Maligne Lake in Jasper, and that is when enough truly became enough.

Parks Canada's decision would allow for the development of overnight commercial accommodations at Maligne Lake – something that is explicitly prohibited by both the

Jasper National Park Management Plan (2010), and the Parks Canada Redevelopment Guidelines for Outlying Commercial Accommodations and Hostels in the Rocky Mountains National Parks (2007).

Allowing overnight commercial accommodations at Maligne Lake is detrimental to the environment and wildlife of the lake and Maligne Valley. The Maligne caribou herd is down to only four individual animals after an avalanche this past winter killed one of only two remaining females, and the north end of Maligne Lake is considered a pinch point for grizzly bears.

Moose are often seen grazing along the water's edge at the north end of the lake, and harlequin ducks are known to nest at the outlet at the north end. Allowing night-time visitors will increase both visitor and commercial traffic along the Maligne Road and could lead to more human-animal conflict, both on the road and at the resort site.

In response to Parks Canada's decision, CPAWS, the Jasper Environmental Association and Ecojustice launched a judicial review in the Federal Court in August. You can help. To learn more, visit www.cpawsnab.org/campaigns/stand-up-for-jasper.

Photo: BWC pendlebury



TEN IS A MAGIC NUMBER FOR PROGRESS

By Anne-Marie Syslak
Executive Director, CPAWS SAB

There are a few moments in life that cause you to pause, reflect and celebrate. Such a moment came a few months ago when I was invited to speak at the November 2014 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Park Congress in Sydney, Australia. The congress is a landmark forum on protected areas bringing people together from more than 160 countries, and held just once every 10 years. This year also happens to be my 10th anniversary with CPAWS SAB.

Back in 2004, I was hired to work in the education department. In the ensuing year, I helped build the environmental education program that reached thousands of students and teachers each year. I had the pleasure of taking immigrant youth on their first experience hiking in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

I was inspired by student action in environmental stewardship and I was driven by my core beliefs about the importance of connecting to nature and the value of conserving parks and wilderness. In 2008, the chapter won a prestigious Alberta Emerald Award for our unique environmental education programs. In 2015, the program will reach more than 100,000 young people.

In 2009, I assumed the role of Executive Director. I remember the thrill of learning that grizzly bears were now listed as a

threatened species in Alberta, and the joy of hearing that Bill 29 (which would weaken our provincial parks act) had been stopped. Meanwhile, more than 100,000 emails were sent to Alberta's premier demanding protection for the Castle Wilderness, and we were part of a number of organizations that suspended logging in the Castle until land-use planning rules were established. Our comments also helped ensure that the proposed Goat's Eye day lodge at Sunshine ski area near Banff meets National Park standards for water quality. These are just a few of the accomplishments I have seen in that time.

Looking back at my 10 years with CPAWS, I celebrate the successes we have had together. The journey is far from over, but it feels good to know that we have made a difference along the way.

In Sydney, I talked about Discover Parks!, our new education program designed to showcase parks and get youth excited about these amazing protected places from a conservation and user perspective. It is a perfect culmination of my 10 years with CPAWS, combining education and conservation and getting back to the basics, connecting youth with parks and wilderness and investing in the next generation of park stewards.

So 10 is a magic number. It helps remind me to celebrate the significant accomplishments that a small organization with smart, passionate staff and volunteers can achieve. It inspires me to continue to make a difference.

Discover Parks!

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DONOR PROFILE: BOB MORGAN

By **Ericka Rau**

Communications and Outreach Coordinator, CPAWS SAB

Tell us a bit about yourself

When it comes to nature, I think I owe my interest in it to my time spent in the West Kootenays in my junior and senior high years. My father had purchased a property with lakeshore access and very quiet roads nearby with opportunities to get up close and personal with nature. These experiences were complemented by taking biology in grade 10 as a required full year course. Eventually all this background led to majoring in biology in university.

What has been your involvement with CPAWS?

My early memories of CPAWS are vague but around the year 2000 or so, I remember thinking that the CPAWS program Grizzly Bears Forever was something I could assist in promoting. I was at a junior high school at the time and I was able to help with piloting it. Over the years, I have participated in some of the campaigns in terms of writing letters, making phone calls, and visiting my MLA and still attend as many public meetings of CPAWS as I can. I have also continued my involvement with the education program.

What drives your support?

I share CPAWS goal of having a system of federal and provincial parks to protect a network of ecosystem types. Frankly, I guess I strongly believe in biodiversity and think it should be fostered.



Value of environmental education

I value environmental education because at the age many of the students are at, they are fairly open to being inspired about big ideas. That includes the appreciation and conservation of nature. Environmental educators can inspire students to care about these things and to begin to take responsibility and to act, most often slowly at first and then in more complicated ways as adults.

Encouraging others

There are many ways to support CPAWS. The easiest step is probably to go to meetings and go on the web page and look around to see what CPAWS is saying about their mission, the parts of the program etc. There are local opportunities to get involved such as getting informed about issues important to CPAWS and making the facts and feelings that go with those campaigns known to family and friends. Supporters who feel comfortable can extend that effort to policy makers including key politicians and especially your own MP and MLA. Finally, CPAWS always welcomes financial assistance from those who can assist in that way.



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HIKING GUIDE INSPIRED BY MAGIC MOMENTS IN NATURE

Interview with Alex Mowat - CPAWS SAB Hiking Guide

Written by Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member



Alex Mowat just concluded an exceptional summer. When he wasn't working at one of three jobs as an outdoor guide and parks information officer, he was -- what else? -- in the mountains. But not just anywhere in the mountains -- he was exulting in beauty on every peak and pass he could.

"It was a beautiful, beautiful summer," says Mowat. "I was up in the peaks, in the flowers, looking down at lakes, and hanging out next to the glaciers."

Usually he was with friends or connected with others via Alberta's growing social network hiking community. "I had a summer of stunning mountain beauty, no doubt. This winter, I need to read some books."

Mowat worked with international students at the University of Calgary for about 10 years. His life took a turn in 1999 when he went to a presentation in Calgary by Karsten Heuer, Executive Director of Y2Y. Heuer's book *Walking The Big Wild* talks about his hiking, skiing and paddling journey from Yellowstone to Yukon. Mowat was entranced by the story. "When I saw him present, it was a crystalizing

moment, and a major factor in my shift to the mountains," Mowat said.

He moved to Canmore in 2004, and began his work as a guide. Because of the growing cultural diversity of visitors to the mountain, he feels that he has the best of both worlds. "I came out and built a career around natural diversity," he says. "It's extremely exciting to combine work with natural diversity, as well as human diversity."

In addition to his job as lead hiking guide for CPAWS SAB, he is a commercial guide for Banff-based White Mountain Adventures, primarily in the Kananaskis, Banff and Kootenay regions. And he is an Information Officer for Alberta Parks at the Barrier Lake Visitor Centre in Kananaskis Country.

We asked Mowat a few questions about the state of parks in our area. Here is a condensed version of his answers:

Q: What do you love about Alberta?

A: Big sky, snow-capped peaks, the beautiful diversity of landscape. I grew up on the prairies; now I live in the mountains. You can go out to Writing-

on-Stone, birdwatch in wetland areas, then connect with glaciers. There's just amazing natural diversity. Between the national and provincial parks, and protected areas, there are so many places to go and explore and play and relax. The same mountain or prairie field can look a thousand different ways or colours depending on the time of the day, the light, the clouds, the air - it's a very special place to live.

Q: What do you love about parks?

A: There's magical places everywhere. That can be Banff, Jasper, Kananaskis. Also, it can be Fish Creek Park or Nose Hill Park in Calgary; it can be a neighbourhood gully. I grew up in Calgary and my parents helped protect Nose Hill Park in the 1970s. Parks protect and give important space to plants and animals, as well

as help us step off the treadmill and give us perspective. It gives us an awe factor to help us see where we fit on this planet. You're just slowing down the whole pace of everything you do. It's not even just stress reduction; it's "eustress" or positive stress that builds our souls.

Q: Why are parks important?

A: It helps us look at ourselves as one species among many. If we can touch, explore, connect and appreciate the natural world, that experience is something we can take home, and hopefully it influences the way we live our lives, our balance and our choices. As we are continuing to develop as a society, parks connect spaces and wildlife corridors. Seeing that connection is new to a lot of us. It really helps us understand the big picture. Also, a day in the park has rejuvenative power. Who could ever come out to the park for a day, and then go back to the city and be more stressed?

Q: How have parks changed?

A: It's amazing to see the impact of the 2013 floods. Mother Nature has reset the dial. There is loads of transformed habitat that will evolve over time. Human built trails and roads were particularly impacted

areas, because they were channels for the water to run off of. Rehabilitation work has been very impressive already in the last year-and-a-half in both national and provincial parks. At the same time, in some cases this is a chance for us to “reset the dial” and realize that natural processes - like floods - that occur on the landscape, may have to be given more space and respect than we may have previously thought.

I also see in park areas an increasing willingness to give other species space, for example, with temporary seasonal closures for bears to accommodate buffalo berry season. We’re slowly, but in a building way, finding a balance. In some areas we are learning to share the landscape, in other cases, we still have challenges to figure out.

Q: What are some trends that you are seeing?

A: There are a lot more diverse faces coming out to explore, newly arrived immigrants and a diverse range of Canadians in general. Park visitation traditionally was pretty white, middle to upper class. Now, we’re getting an increasing diversity with people from all parts of the world - international and Canadians alike - from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The diversity also includes a lot of people with various disabilities. Various non-profit and parks groups are working together to create access and opportunity for people who previously wouldn’t have had the opportunity to come out. I have seen and experienced Alberta Parks and Parks Canada both being involved in amazing programs and volunteering has been incredible - seeing peoples’ accomplishment and joy at being in natural areas they might not have imagined they could have been in.

The other thing is snow-shoeing in the winter. It is the fastest growing winter sport out there for baby boomers, young families, adults, new Canadians - many people feel less intimidated strapping on a pair of snow-shoes than participating in some other winter sports.

Also, social media and the internet are changing the way people search for



Alex Mowat leads a group of students on a hike in Fish Creek Provincial Park

information about parks in general, what to do in parks and who to do it with. Change here is fast-paced, user-friendly and helps create community but also means public safety issues need to be communicated differently since not all interactions with the public happen at visitor centre front counters any more.

Q: What is your most memorable experience in parks?

A: During a hike to Grizzly Col with a group in Kananakis Country several years ago in September, while stopped for lunch, a grizzly bear ran over the pass to our left, five to seven metres away. It was a beautiful, sub-adult, golden grizzly bear. It stopped, inquisitively stood up, and looked at us, and kind of turned as if to say, “Oh my God, what are these things in our way?” It immediately retreated down the other side of the pass from where it came. As a couple of us stood up with our bear spray, the same bear and a sibling, again ran over in front of us, likely headed to the fabulous feeding habitat on the south side of the pass. There was nothing aggressive in the bears’ behaviour but it was one of the most beautiful encounters with bears I’ve ever had. Later, we walked south along a ridgetop and watched the bears down in the valley most of the day.

The other moment was during a walk in Bow Valley Provincial Park, last year, by the Bow River. Listening to trumpeter and tundra swans honking in and watching them do beautiful airport landings. As I sat in the amphitheatre created by the

slopes about the river, I continued to listen to the orchestra of the swans and a variety of ducks. Then through my binoculars I watched a coyote come along the far bank. A few minutes later, I saw the Bow Valley elk herd coming down further along the same bank, and they were trying to make a decision whether to cross the river. As I watched for the next hour, with the coming of dusk, I started to hear great horned owls calling to each other and watched a beaver moving up and down the bank. I had become part of the scenery and was tingling as I witnessed it all.

Q: Where’s your favourite spot to go?

A: There are many. There are a few spots I go where I’m happy that a lot of people don’t get to go. I also spend a lot of time in Kananaskis. It’s an amazing place. The majesty of the Lake Louise area. I did my first hike in the Castle this year, a place called Table Mountain, with gorgeous red and brown rock mixed with springtime snow and new green growth lower down. Just stunning. The Castle area is one of the areas in which I’m going to spend more time in future. I’ve also had stunning experiences in Waterton; Akamina Ridge is an absolute gem I will keep going back to again and again. But to be honest, I keep discovering new wonderlands of landscape, sky and animal behaviour every time I go out. Every time I have got it covered with favourites, I am humbled anew. And I am very thankful for that, and for the incredible role that parks and wild spaces plays for us all.

CELEBRATING VICTORIES IN OUR NATIONAL PARKS

By Anne-Marie Syslak - Executive Director, CPAWS SAB and Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member with information from Parks Canada

Each November, Banff and Lake Louise/Yoho/Kootenay National parks host a forum to showcase their work over the past year and discuss how they are doing relative to their management plans. As a watchdog organization, we often focus on concerns in the parks. However, there is much to celebrate in what Parks Canada has done. Here are few highlights:



Seasonal travel restriction on the Bow Valley Parkway implemented; this important spring closure is improving habitat security for carnivores.

• Removal of the 40 Mile Creek dam in cooperation with the Town of Banff. A series of baffles are being installed and will improve the ability of bull trout to move upstream, through the remaining infrastructure (a flat section of concrete substrate) during low flows when they need access to spawning areas upstream.

• Controlled burns and forest restoration. This fall, Parks Canada seized the opportunity to conduct the Sawback prescribed burn. This was one of the most efficient prescribed burn operations in the history of the Parks Canada Agency; with teams from across the mountain national parks, and the Banff Fire Department working in cooperation.

• Aquatic restoration. Taking advantage of various construction projects required to repair infrastructure damaged during the 2013 flood, Parks Canada has seized on this effort to reclaim and restore aquatic ecosystems. In particular, several projects in and adjacent to Cascade Creek (below the Minnewanka Reservoir) have included tremendous efforts to restore the long-neglected watershed.

• Grizzly bear research and management. Parks Canada and CPR have completed the fourth year of a five-year research project aimed at identifying effective mitigations to reduce grizzly bear mortality along the CPR right of way through Banff and Yoho National Parks. Some aspects of the field work are completed; others will collect data for one more season. In addition to this research, Parks Canada and CPR have cooperated on an off-site trial of electro-mats and various fencing configurations.



• Continued work on the plan to reintroduce bison. Some pre-condition monitoring (songbirds, vegetation, water quality) is under way, so that we can better understand the impacts of bison on the landscape, should the project proceed in the next few years.

• Construction of mitigation measures on Highway 93 south to reduce wildlife mortality.

We are extremely supportive of Parks Canada's efforts to protect the ecological integrity of the park for future generations.



GLENBOW RANCH: A FASCINATING TIME CAPSULE



**By Kirsten Olson
Office and Fund
Program Administrator,
CPAWS SAB**

Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park is not only one of Alberta's newest parks; it also has a rich human history.

The 1,300-hectare gem hugs the Bow River just southeast of Cochrane.

Depending on the time of year, visitors will find wildflowers and wildlife, sandstone cliffs and the glacier-fed Bow River. It feels tranquil and undisturbed, but author and historian Fred Stenson detailed some of its fascinating history in a recent book.

The park is on land that was used by First Nations people for thousands of years. A 2007 archaeological survey shows that there are 27 prehistoric sites on Glenbow Ranch, mostly "stone features" such as tipi rings, flakes of stone from tool making, and other indications of where people camped.

In 1881, Senator Matthew Cochrane became the first rancher to establish a large-scale ranch on leased government land in what is now Alberta. It is no coincidence that when the CPR built its prairie route, it was along the Bow Valley and so close to Cochrane's ranch he could load cattle from his backyard. The CPR included Glenbow Station on its timetable for the first time in 1889, likely the origin of the Glenbow name.

Homesteaders began to appear soon after the railway line was established, but many of them found the natural barriers of river and coulees to be isolating and the land hard to farm. However, one new arrival from England, Stephen Christopher Lay Moore, found a use for the outcrops of sandstone on his land.

Sandstone had become the building material of choice in nearby Calgary, particularly after a massive fire in 1886. The Alberta Legislature building in Edmonton was built with sandstone from the Glenbow quarry as was the Calgary courthouse and land titles office. By 1906, the quarry employed about 100 men, and, at one point, Glenbow's growth was expected to exceed that of Cochrane. The town included a busy

general store, and the townspeople enjoyed polo matches and dances held in the stonecutters' hall.

By 1912, the best of the sandstone had been used, and the quarry shut down. Some residents skidded their houses on the frozen Bow River to resettle in Bowness, now a part of Calgary. Most of the families had left at the start of the First World War, but one of the remaining ranchers was Chester de la Vergne. He had his ranch at Glenbow, but de la Vergne had lost most of his other investments during the Great Depression that began in 1929. Depression-era land values were extremely low, so the ranch was not worth much, but de la Vergne's lawyer, Eric Harvie, purchased it as a recreation property for his family.

Harvie had also invested in land near Leduc that paid off when oil was discovered there in 1947. Since his wealth came from Alberta and Canada, Harvie felt the province and country should benefit from his philanthropy. He became a collector of art and artefacts, many of which became the basis of Glenbow Museum.



Photo Credit to Linda Vick "The old Post Office and General Store is one of the few visible reminders of Glenbow Village, a once vibrant industrial community."

Harvie's son Neil was interested in ranching and took over the operation in the 1950s. Neil's conservation focus was the threatened fescue grasslands. He wanted to have his land designated as a provincial ecologically sensitive park, but he thought that tax laws for donating land should offer the same incentives as those for donating cultural property, such as art and historic documents.

Neil died in 1999, but the work he had done enabled his children to donate the land in 2006. Today, many of the First Nations sites on the land remain undisturbed. By making this area a provincial park, there will be less future disturbance and the opportunity for future discoveries.

A MAGICAL LIFE IN MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

By Max Winkler



Being a park warden is not a job but a way of life, my chief warden once told me. My family and I were blessed to live that life from 1959 until I retired from the service in 1987.

From the beginning, I loved the work. All of the western national parks were then divided into warden districts, with a warden for each. For my first four years, I was stationed in remote backcountry districts.

Our son, Terry, was just 11 weeks old when my wife, Julie, and I took turns carrying him as we rode our horses the 47 kilometres to the headquarters cabin of the Brazeau district. Not only did he survive that trip, but years later he went on to join the Warden's Service.

Mountains were in my bones. As a youth in Bavaria, Germany, I biked, skied and climbed at home as well as in Austria and Italy. I came to southern Ontario in 1953 as a 22-year-old, but I missed the mountains of my youth.

A year later, I moved to Edmonton and whenever possible spent time in Banff, Jasper and Elk Island. I met several park wardens and learned what their work entailed and what national parks stood for.

Within five years, I had gained Canadian citizenship, and could apply to be a park warden in Jasper. It was the beginning

of a 28-year career in which I and my family were privileged to live in incredibly beautiful surroundings.

There is a marked contrast in the life and living conditions of wardens in my time and in generations that followed. Today, there are no districts and technology is advanced. But not during my day. Of the 14 districts that existed in Jasper until the mid-1970s, five were accessible only by trails using horses in summer, or by using snowshoes or skis in winter.

A winter supply of food had to be packed in by the horses in the fall. My work involved trail patrols covering the district, cabin and phone line maintenance, game count, checking for possible poachers and forest fires.

We lived in a log cabin year-round with the exception of 15 days' annual leave or for taking training courses. We were on call 24 hours a day. The warden was allowed to have one day in town each month when he turned in a monthly report and picked up supplies and groceries. Getting to town in winter could sometimes mean four or five days of snowshoeing. Holidays could only be taken in the off-season of November until April.

It is amazing that in the late 1880s some people in North America had the foresight and determination to establish the world's first national parks, like Yellowstone with its geysers and Banff with its hot springs.

National park status was a revolutionary idea at a time when much of this continent's west was still wilderness. Guidelines, blueprints, policy and regulations had to be developed.

In hindsight, we can see that some unwise decisions were made, such as predator control (killing wolves, coyotes and cougars), and the moving of diseased Plains Bison from Buffalo National Park (Wainwright) to Wood Buffalo National Park and interbreeding them with Wood Bison. Another example is the bringing of several hundred elk from Yellowstone and 20 years later having to slaughter many to

control the population. Today, we can only hope that future decisions are not more detrimental to our national parks than the moving of Plains Bison to Wood Buffalo National Park.

Most of the millions of visitors who come to our parks each year are seeking a relatively undisturbed area where wildlife, plants, forests, rivers and lakes survive as they have for countless centuries. Parks Canada is to be commended for establishing many new parks throughout Canada, but on a map they still appear as little islands surrounded by roads, town sites, oil and gas exploration, logging and strip mining. These are living, invaluable museums, preserving a relatively pristine environment.

Ottawa wants our parks to pay for themselves. To save money, park maintenance and staff numbers have been cut. To me, it is a disservice to have our parks operated as a business, making them less accessible to low income families. They belong to all of us, rich and poor.

To raise revenue, we are being offered Disneyland-type entertainment from commercial operators like Brewster and Maligne Tours. We now have the Glacier Walk near the Columbia Icefields and the via ferrata on Mt. Norquay. And we are fighting to prevent developers from erecting overnight accommodation at Maligne Lake in contravention with long-standing park policy.

I think back to the vision of the National Parks Act of 1930. Although the act has been amended a number of times, the dedication clause has remained consistent. It states:

"The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment... and National Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations." Henry D. Thoreau wrote, "In Wilderness is the preservation of the world." That was almost 200 years ago and these words are even more meaningful today.

WOLVES IN THE WILD DELIVER MEMORABLE MOMENT

By Doug Firby - CPAWS SAB Board Member



Choosing one magic moment in our national parks is a near impossibility, because every visit brings an experience that is profound and memorable in its own way.

One of the many moments that stands out in my memory is an encounter my wife and I had with an alpha wolf and its mate a few years back. It was a snowy and bitterly cold day late in November, and we had driven

from Calgary to Jasper to attend a weekend event. Even getting there was an adventure -- the Icefields Parkway was temporarily closed to deal with avalanches.

On the Saturday, we had some free time and decided to head out to Maligne Lake. We knew no one would be there; knew it would be magical.

It was a cold day -- probably minus 20 -- cloudy and beautiful. As we crept along the snow-encrusted Range Road 260A, we were

virtually alone, as we expected. Except for two creatures in the distance.

Although it was difficult to determine what we were seeing from far away, I sensed by their demeanour and size that they weren't coyotes. We slowed to a crawl and approached almost silently. As we neared, I said to my wife, "They're wolves!"

They calmly held their ground on the edge of the road as we stopped beside them. They looked at us; we looked back. I pulled out my camera, grabbed a quick couple of frames and then slowly rolled away. They remained in the roadway, staring at us like we were from outer space.

Maligne Lake had that silence that comes on still days when the snowflakes lazily drift down. In the distance was a moose with her calf. We were mesmerized by the stillness and raw beauty. We were the only humans in sight, and we felt the joy that comes with enjoying nature in full solitude.

The wolves were gone by the time we headed back, oblivious and no doubt indifferent to the fact that they had given us one of those moments so rare that they can only be found in our national parks.



WILD SOIREE BEARS & WATER

Kevin Van Tighem

February 27, 2015

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HOTEL
Arts

Photo: Chad Larsen

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR NATURE IS STRONG

By **Éric Hébert-Daly**
National Executive Director, CPAWS



They're beautiful, awe-inspiring and breathtaking. And in addition to the benefits parks have on our physical and mental health, they have hard economic value, as well.

For every dollar invested in provincial and national parks, \$6 in benefits is returned to the Canadian economy, according to federal government studies. Canada's international reputation for its wilderness is one of the key reasons many visitors come here. Both visitors to Canada and Canadians spend money on food, equipment, hotels, and outfitting guides. It's no wonder that we generate such positive economic spinoffs.

It turns out money really does grow on trees. If you take into account the economic value of replacing the services that nature provides us for free, the real economic value starts to shine through.

By **Kirsten Olson**
Office and Fund Administrator, CPAWS SAB

Wilderness in Canada is healthier and more robust because of that half-century of work by staff and volunteers with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Since 1963, CPAWS has been instrumental in the creation of more than two-thirds of Canada's protected areas.

Established just four years after the national organization, CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) was one of the first regional chapters in the country. It was started as a grassroots organization in response to commercial development pressures in Banff National Park. The work of CPAWS SAB helped shape the organization as a nationally recognized conservation organization.

What will it cost us to replace the clean water produced by our streams, rivers and lakes? The fresh water that occurs naturally in our wilderness, cleaned by mosses and plants, filtered by fish and micro-organisms, all happen for us without payment. Yet our modern-day economic system assesses no value to these natural systems until they are divided into pieces and sold off.

Our trees have no identified economic value until they are cut down for consumer use. The air, food and habitat they provide mean nothing to us in the global financial system. Yet the very foundations of our own survival, air and water, are the products of healthy intact ecosystems. What price are we willing to pay to get those back once they've been lost?

Parks and protected areas also save us money by helping to prevent natural disasters, like floods, stabilizing soil, preventing coastline erosion. Trees and vegetation provide a sponge-like effect for big rainstorms so that they don't all rush into rivers and lakes. They store carbon to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Natural corridors provide species of animals and plants to migrate as the climate changes too.

All of this reminds us that the battle between the environment and the economy is not a real division. They are interdependent and work closely together. Our parks provide us with enormous financial and economic support beyond all of the other benefits we gain from them.

With your help, we can make sure parks will continue to contribute economically, physically and socially well into the future.



CPAWS 70's Newsletter

Today, CPAWS SAB is one of 13 chapters across the country that focuses on protecting parks and natural ecosystems. It is a leader in landscape-scale wilderness conservation, national and provincial park management, establishment and protection of parks, and environmental education.

CPAWS SAB works with other not-for-profit organizations, industry, government and First Nations people to safeguard public lands and water. Here is a sampling of some of the shared successes over the years:

1967: The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) (later to be renamed CPAWS) established the Calgary/Banff Regional Chapter.

1971: NPPAC played a key role in defeating the "Prairie River Improvement Plan" which would have diverted water from northern Alberta watersheds to the southern part of the province.

1972: NPPAC won a long-fought battle against a large scale tourism development in response to a proposal to host the winter Olympics in Banff National Park. Holding the games in Banff National Park would have had a terrible impact on wildlife and habitat in the Lake Louise area.

1985: The organization was renamed the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS).

1988: Amendments were made to the National Parks Act. Wording was changed to state that maintaining ecological integrity must come first in park management. These changes came about due, in large part, to a CPAWS campaign.

1993: Wind Valley, a major wildlife corridor near Exshaw, was saved from development.

1993: CPAWS, working with other groups, founded the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative.

1994: First staff member was hired, working part-time. The staff increased to two full-time positions in 1996.

1996: The Banff Bow Valley Study on Ecological Integrity was completed, resulting in legal caps on commercial development in Banff National Park.

1995: Construction started on overpasses over the TransCanada Highway in Banff National Park to facilitate wildlife movement and reduce wildlife collisions. CPAWS was a leader in working with Parks Canada to ensure this conservation effort.

1997: CPAWS Southern Alberta began its education program which, to date, has reached more than 95,000 students and teachers.

1998: New Alberta parks were established: Elbow Sheep and Bow Valley Wildlands.

1999: CPAWS intervened to prevent an exploratory well from being drilled in the Whaleback area of Southern Alberta. This was the first time an oil company was declined. Bob Creek Wildlands and Black Creek Heritage Rangeland were established.

2004: Spray Valley Provincial Park and Bow Valley Wildland Park were expanded.

2006: Alberta government suspended the Grizzly Bear hunt.

2008: CPAWS SAB received an Alberta Emerald Award for Environmental Education.

2009: CPAWS Calgary/Banff was renamed CPAWS Southern Alberta Chapter.

2010: Grizzly Bears were listed as threatened under Alberta's Wildlife Act.

2011: Changes to the Alberta Parks Act, under Bill 29, that would have undermined Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas, were stopped after CPAWS and other groups held public information campaigns.

2011: More than 100,000 emails were sent to the premier demanding protection for the Castle Special Place.

2012: Logging in the Castle was suspended, pending the outcome of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP).

2013: A planned daylodge at Goat's Eye Mountain in Sunshine Village ski resort was forced to meet national park water standards.

2014: Maligne Lake hotel proposal was not approved.

2014: Bow Valley Parkway seasonal mandatory travel restrictions were implemented.

2014: The final SSRP was released creating the Pekisko Heritage Rangeland and some protection of the Eastern Slopes.

As our work continues, the chapter will push for more sustainable resource extraction practices and less invasive recreational use of our public lands. We often don't take the time to celebrate our significant successes before we start preparing for a new campaign.



CAPTURE THE CANADIAN WILD

CPAWS PHOTO CONTEST 2015

JANUARY 9TH — FEBRUARY 9TH 2015



Photo: James Anderson

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