

GREEN NOTES 50TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER



50^{Years}
of wilderness protection!

50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Welcome Messages

National President • 3

National Executive Director • 3

Southern Alberta Executive Director • 4

Our Roots

The Conservation Movement Awakens • 6

Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow • 7

Public Opposition and University Support • 8

An Urban Conservation Legacy • 9

An Era of Protest • 9

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Branching Out

Local Work with a National Voice • 12

A Time of Significant Change • 12

A Sense of Accomplishment and Urgency • 13

Education as a Conservation Strategy • 14

Volunteerism: The Lifeblood of CPAWS • 15

Volunteer Profile: Gord James • 15

The Canopy and Beyond

20 Years of Innovative Education • 16

Reflecting While Looking to the Future • 18

Alberta Needs CPAWS • 19

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"ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL BOARD, THANK YOU SOUTHERN ALBERTA CHAPTER!"

By **Michael Robinson**
National President

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To celebrate a 50th anniversary of any sort is a mark of victory in the disruptive, instant messaging, ephemeral world of contemporary human society.

Strangely, these rushed, culturally induced values borrow more and more from technology and less and less from nature. How wonderful then, to be able to celebrate 50 years of human service to parks and wilderness, where a different set of natural values are at play. They are championed every day by staff, board members and CPAWS' Southern Alberta volunteers who cherish membership in one of the oldest chapters in the 53-year-old national organization.

It is perhaps understandable that Alberta would harbour a chapter like Southern Alberta, because of its incredible collection of National and Provincial Parks and protected areas. All Canadians are aware of this legacy, and the annual pattern of seasonal use and reverence that continues its growth. But the old maxim comes to mind: "To whom much is given, much is expected." The parks and wilderness legacy of Southern Alberta requires constant stewardship and vigilance by the citizens. It has never been enough to leave this role to professional parks' staff. CPAWS' Southern Alberta Chapter has conducted exemplary education and conservation programs that help to ensure that ecosystem integrity comes first.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the chapter board and staff for showing their grit and creative energies over the past few years of economic tough sledding in Alberta. Chair Gord James and Executive Director Anne-Marie Syslak have shared their innovative thoughts and actions in this respect with CPAWS' National Board, and these efforts are contributing to CPAWS' overall visioning for the next 53 years.

On behalf of the National Board, thank you Southern Alberta Chapter! Onwards!

"When you carry out award-winning education programs, you shape the next generation of conservation leadership"

Photo: Nathan Brewer



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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

The conservation epicentre of Canada

When people think of where the centre of the country is, it is always different depending on your perspective. Geographically, it's in western Nunavut. Population, you'll point to Toronto. History, possibly Quebec City. But if you're thinking about conservation, I'd make the case that southern Alberta is the epicentre.

When you consider that the Calgary/Banff chapter was the first chapter of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, the predecessor of CPAWS, it actually isn't that surprising. Our first national park was Banff. Our first big concerns about park management stemmed from activities in our mountain parks. Industrial development decisions that have affected much of Canada's land over the last half century have been made in Calgary. Southern Alberta is conservation's homeland in Canada.

That's why having a strong chapter, with a powerful voice, is so important—and why the whole country cheers for your continued success. When you win a battle in Banff, you make the whole parks system stronger. When you carry out award-winning education programs, you shape the next generation of conservation leadership. CPAWS is Canada's voice for wilderness because your chapter's voice makes it heard.

It's been a joy for me to work closely with CPAWS Southern Alberta over the last eight years, to amplify that voice, and leverage your success everywhere I can. As we drive to new outcomes in the coming years, that will be full of opportunity, I am convinced that we will see the tide turn for better park management as well. The future looks green and so much of it will start with CPAWS Southern Alberta.



By Anne-Marie Syslak
Executive Director

FROM A SAPLING TO A BEAUTIFUL FOREST AND BEYOND

SOUTHERN ALBERTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Southern Alberta Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS SAB). For half a century, CPAWS SAB has been a leading voice for parks and wilderness in Alberta, and has achieved significant conservation success.

Without CPAWS SAB, our Rocky Mountain National Parks would look vastly different than they do today, we wouldn't have an award-winning education program, and we might not have all of the amazing parks and protected areas that we enjoy in Alberta today. These include areas like Kananaskis, Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park, the Whaleback, and the Castle—just to name a few. Even Calgary's iconic Nose Hill Park and Fish Creek Provincial Park find roots in our chapter.

To prepare for our anniversary gala, which took place September 22, we started talking to some of the amazing people who have been involved in the Southern Alberta Chapter over the

years. Our incredibly rich grassroots history is a tribute to the tireless work and support of so many who believed in the value of nature, and the critical importance of protecting our spectacular southern Alberta landscape.

These people formed the fabric of our organization. Some were academics, scientists, and lawyers, but most were concerned citizens—with the sole motivation of protecting the Alberta wilderness they love. Being part of CPAWS SAB meant, and continues to mean, building a legacy to be proud of. We celebrate the people, places, and stories on this anniversary.

Like a beautiful tree, we have come from strong roots and have grown into a majestic forest. This is the theme of this newsletter.

From seeds to saplings: establishing our roots

The Department of Geography, at what was then the University of Alberta in Calgary, was the epi-centre of it all. The 1960s witnessed the advent of the first National Parks Policy, ongoing controversies over such issues as leasing, the potential for Winter Games in Banff National Park, and master plans involving significant road and facilities developments. Gordon Nelson,



a geographer at the university, wrote a letter concerning the need for public engagement on these issues. This triggered a movement involving other academics, including Bob Scace, Stephen Herrero, John Marsh, and Harvey Buckmaster, as well as concerned citizens, including Aileen Harman and Gerry Wilkie.

Stephen Herrero first learned of a Toronto based group, called the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC), through a notice in the Calgary Herald. Sharing a similar concern for developments in the national parks, he contacted the organization, planting the seeds for a Calgary/Banff chapter.

The academics in Calgary organized the "Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" conference in 1968. This conference, co-sponsored by the university and NPPAC, involved a range of international, national, and local stakeholders; and introduced a new era of citizen engagement in planning, management, and use of parks and protected areas in Canada.

The conference provided the stimulus to get the struggling NPPAC off the ground, and led to the creation of the Calgary/Banff Chapter—the organization's first regional chapter. Three successive conferences, held in 1978, 1985, and 2008, helped establish our chapter as a leader in national park issues.

“people, places, and stories are what we celebrate.”

Branching out: the growing years

In 1985, the NPPAC changed its name to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). Harvey Locke, Wendy Francis, and Dave Poulton were key leaders in the Calgary/Banff Chapter during these years.

Development pressure on our national and provincial parks continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. During this era, the CPAWS Calgary/Banff chapter achieved many conservation successes, including the now famous wildlife crossing structures in Banff National Park, the launch of the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, and the Banff-Bow Valley Study—which set the stage for legal caps on commercial development in Banff.

The wilderness protection successes of this era included the Wind Valley, Bow Valley, Elbow-Sheep Park, the Whaleback, and Spray Valley.

Volunteers remain the cornerstone of CPAWS SAB. The organization did not have any paid staff until Ann Lemorande came on board as Administration Director in 1994. Even today, the number of volunteers far exceeds the small team of paid staff—a testament to our grassroots role as a voice and convener for wilderness advocacy.

In 1997, Gareth Thomson founded the CPAWS SAB education program. It is unique, not only among CPAWS chapters, but among conservation organizations in Alberta. At the onset, the program focused on youth in schools. It was curriculum-linked, science-based, action-oriented, and combined multiple classroom visits with outdoor experience as an effective way to connect students with conservation.

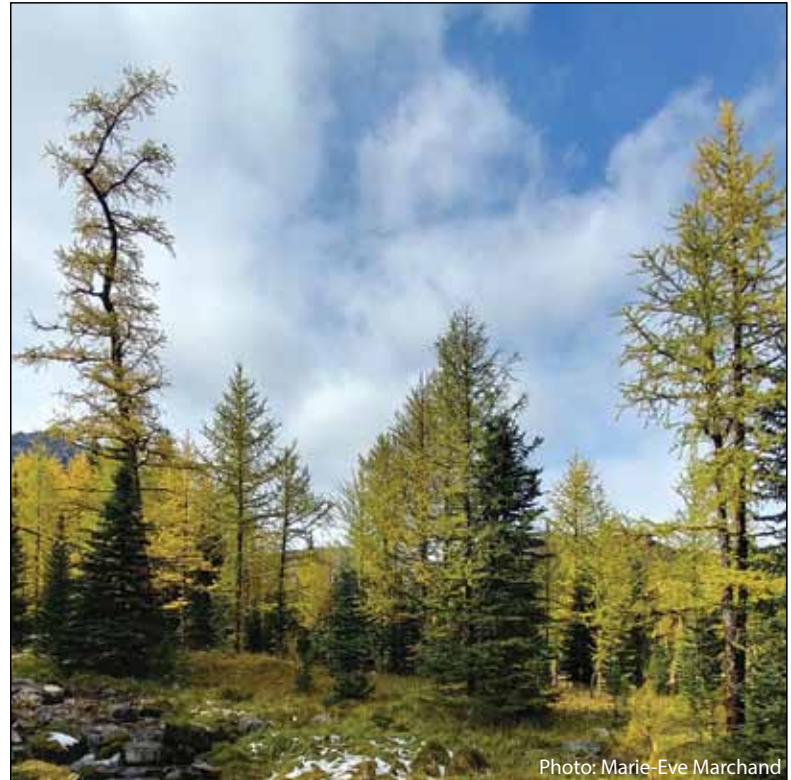


Photo: Marie-Eve Marchand

A beautiful forest: the canopy and beyond

A strong base enabled continued maturation and success for the chapter from the early 2000s to present day. The education program, in particular, supported conservation work during this time. The chapter saw education as being instrumental in fostering stewardship through an understanding of environmental issues.

To date, the education program has taught more than 115,000 participants, and has expanded beyond youth to include university students, adults, and new immigrant groups. It earned Alberta's prestigious Emerald Award in 2008. In 2016, CPAWS SAB received a national award from the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communications, for its significant contribution to environmental learning in Canada.

During this time the chapter's conservation efforts contributed to the suspension of the grizzly bear hunt in 2006. Later, in 2010, we helped increase protection of the species by having them listed as threatened under the Alberta Wildlife Act. Rocky mountain national park management remains a defining element for our chapter's work.

Our Alberta-wide poll on recreation, and recent report on sustainable logging, have also been significant research pieces, contributing to conservation provincially.

Our history is like a tree growing from sapling to a beautiful forest, even when tested by buffering resistance. With more people, and continuous land-use pressures, protection and management of our wild southern Alberta landscape is as relevant as ever. We celebrate 50 years of conservation in this region, and will need continued support and engagement for the next 50 years. We thank everyone involved in helping protect Alberta's wild future, and celebrate the past, present, and future champions of CPAWS Southern Alberta.

Yours in conservation,

Anne-Marie



Photo: Jason Simolensky

THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT REAWAKENS



Bob Scace
Past Chair, Founding Member

Bob Scace describes the start of the local NPPAC/CPAWS group as part of a reawakening in Alberta's conservation movement.

It was a citizen movement, which followed decades after the short-lived, nation-wide Commission of

Conservation (1910-21), and the more regionally focused Canadian National Parks Association, founded in 1923. The latter faded away shortly after World War II, leaving Canada and Alberta without an independent citizens' voice on national parks until the 1960s.

When the Trans-Canada Highway was completed in the late 1950s, an influx of people arrived in Banff National Park, resulting in significant development proposals for ski hills, roads, tourism infrastructure, and Olympic bids. As national park development gained momentum, and diminished the ecological integrity of the park, concerned individuals set about creating a voice for more thoughtful approaches to park planning, management and use. People were beginning to more fully appreciate the importance of protected places.

People were beginning to more fully appreciate the importance of protected places

In 1964, Bob moved to Calgary to study public lands at the University. Influenced by his professor, Gordon Nelson, he took an interest in parks management issues, focused his thesis on the Banff town site, and joined other academics in the rebirth of Alberta's conservation movement.

While reading the paper one day, one of Bob's colleagues, Stephen Herrero, read an ad for the National and Provincial Park Association of Canada (NPPAC), a Toronto-based organization with a similar focus to their work. They reached out to the NPPAC, who recognized the value of a local group situated

so close to a prominent national park like Banff. The NPPAC, however, was not clear on how to make this relationship work, so the Calgary group formed an unofficial chapter in 1965.

Their grassroots group operated with a small annual budget of between \$100 and \$300. The chapter operated with an attitude of "let's get on with the work as the need is there." They all volunteered their time for meetings and letter-writing campaigns.

In 1967, the first official chapter of the NPPAC was created in Calgary, planting the roots for CPAWS Southern Alberta to leave a legacy of conservation work and protected areas that we proudly celebrate this year.



Photo: Lisa Yano



CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS: TODAY & TOMORROW



Gordon Nelson
Past Chair, Founder

Out of growing concern for development in our national parks, Gordon Nelson, Harvey Buckmaster, and a few associates began holding informal meetings at the University of Calgary.

Graduate students in geography undertook research on National Parks topics, and became actively involved in addressing conservation issues.

This small group began to grow as they attracted other like-minded individuals, eventually forming their unofficial relationship with the National and Provincial Parks Association (NPPAC), in Toronto.

Gordon remembers three major issues that the community rallied around; proposal of a Master Plan involving extensive road and facilities development, the expansion of the Lake Louise Ski resort, and an Olympic bid within Banff National Park.

Eventually, through public talks, written submissions, and other activities, these proposals were all withdrawn or rejected.

With development concerns in mind, one of their early achievements was organizing the "Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" conference, an international event which took two

years to organize, and would become a significant part of Canada's conservation history. Hundreds of people attended the conference, which featured an impressive roster of guest speakers, including Canada's Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

In 1967, While Gordon and his small group of academic colleagues were organizing this conference, the NPPAC created the official Calgary/Banff chapter. This set the precedent for the NPPAC chapter program.

The chapter model sets CPAWS apart in the landscape of provincial and national conservation organizations. With 13 chapters, spanning nearly every province and territory, local chapters work on the ground, with local stakeholders, on local conservation issues. The individual chapters are united through a national voice that can amplify their messages.

An organization like CPAWS is still important today Gordon says. "In the current climate of conservation, there is a constant need for civic engagement." He sees that we are still facing some of the same challenges, such as parks development. Gordon sees the education program as a strategic tool to meeting these challenges. He also strongly supports research and evidence-based decision-making in moving the conservation agenda forward.

"CPAWS education programs are critical to changing the culture and attitudes from the bottom up."

"In the current climate of conservation, there is a constant need for civic engagement."

PUBLIC OPOSITION AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT



Stephen Herrero
Past Board Chair, Founding Member

Stephen Herrero sees the early work of the Calgary/Banff chapter of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) as fundamental to helping CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) become a recognized and respected voice for conservation in Alberta.

Stephen joined the NPPAC as a concerned academic with the provocative question, "What can I do?" In the 13 years he served as the co-chair of the organization, Steve remembers the proposed development in Lake Louise as a one of the critical issues that galvanized support for more protection within the parks.

In the wake of an unpopular attempt to host the Olympics at Lake Louise, there was a corporate proposal for a large-scale development at the base of the ski area. This proposal, supported by Parks Canada, was a concerning indication of park management priorities.

A key point of public opposition to this proposal was a six-story building that included time share condominiums. Stephen remembers an elderly woman speaking up and saying "the area is beautiful" and not to desecrate it, as she would like to see it herself someday—the appreciation and

concern for Lake Louise went beyond those who spent time in the area.

The Lake Louise campaign included a popular corporate boycott, in which many concerned citizens cut up, and mailed back, their corporate credit cards.

A member of the Lake Louise Development group attempted to intervene with the NPPAC by approaching the University of Calgary president, Fred Caruthers, asking Caruthers if it was appropriate for faculty to be using the university as a base for their campaigns. This was a pivotal moment for the Calgary/Banff chapter. The president voiced his support for university faculty in their right to question and protest.

Eventually, the protest took a surprising turn when the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development expressed that the government did not support the development plan. This poignant expression represented a political shift, wherein the environmental public voice influenced decision-making.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s conservation groups, out of a sense of urgency, needed to rally and protest just to have their concerns heard. Today, Stephen continues to notice similar patterns of park development and management that does not place ecological integrity first. Although environmental impact is an important part of the development process, CPAWS continues to play an important role pressuring national parks to prioritize ecological integrity.

CPAWS continues to play an important role pressuring national parks to prioritize ecological integrity.





AN URBAN CONSERVATION LEGACY



Harvey Buckmaster
Past Board Chair, Founding Member

Harvey Buckmaster remembers attending the first meeting Gordon Nelson called to determine interest in forming a Chapter of the NPPAC.

As one who expressed interest, Harvey became an integral part of the NPPAC, following Gordon as the chapter chair in 1970 and 1971.

After reading a study on the mobility of Calgary residents, Harvey realized that there was a need for large parks adjacent to urban areas, as Calgarians rarely left the city—dispelling a myth that Banff was Calgary's playground. While most of the NPPAC members focused their efforts on national parks, Harvey represented the NPPAC on initiatives that were a little closer to home.

Harvey conceived the idea for Calgary's Nose Hill Park and was involved in the planning and protecting of Nose Hill, as well as Fish Creek Provincial Park, two distinct natural areas that Calgarians treasure. He continued to work on the Nose Hill Advisory Committee until he left Calgary in 1993.

He reflects fondly on the time he and his wife Margaret were involved with the NPPAC and CPAWS.

"Looking back over the past 50 years, we feel our involvement with the NPPAC and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association has enriched our life. The four wilderness backpacking trips that I led for CPAWS in the 1970s gave me a unique experience. I had been wilderness hiking since I was ten years old but it was special to be able to share my love of the wilderness with people from across our country. Reading their newsletters educated us about parks in other parts of Canada and encouraged us to write letters on many park issues."

AN ERA OF PROTEST



Rosemary Nation
Past Board Chair

Rosemary Nation began volunteering with the NPPAC Calgary/Banff chapter in the late 1970s, inspired by the impending Lake Louise development and the national parks management plan.

Rosemary describes environmentalism, in that era, as standing in stark contrast to the status quo of mainstream society. The relationship between environmentalists and government could be illustrated by the following stereotype Rosemary recalls hearing from Alberta's Minister of Environment. "They wear wire-rimmed glasses and have ticks in their hair."

There was no room for funding or collaboration with corporate entities, like oil companies. "It was an era of protest, fueled by a passion for environmental activism."

She remembers operating the chapter on a shoestring budget. Financing their campaigns was always a concern, and a distraction from their important work. Rosemary recalls a financial breakthrough when the chapter took an opportunity to volunteer at a government-run casino. They were able to raise \$29,000 in two days, which was an unprecedented amount that allowed the volunteers to focus on conservation work.



Photo: Steve Blackwell

As the chapter chair, and despite the polarized attitudes, Rosemary regularly met with government officials. This reflected an important shift within the environmental movement, and the NPPAC/CPAWS.

Today, society recognizes the important role conservation plays in a healthy economy, CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) is a collaborative, solutions-based organization, working with stakeholders, including first nations, government, and industry. This shift has significantly helped CPAWS increase their capacity for conservation and education.

CPAWS SAB has since been able to further increase capacity through ongoing local fundraising efforts that allow for a handful of full-time staff positions, and an extensive education program in this region.

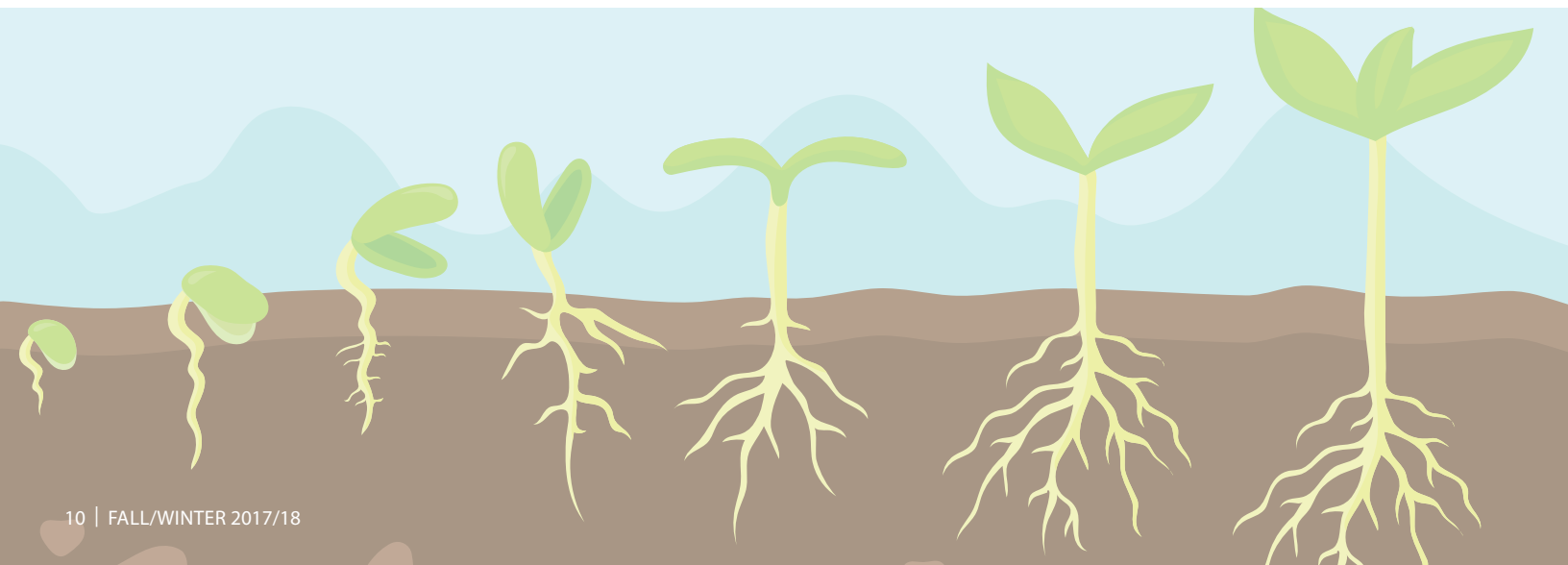
Relative to the times, CPAWS SAB continues to operate on a lean budget, so continual support is vital to the ongoing success of local conservation issues.



Photo: Mike McIvor

CPAWS SOUTHERN ALBERTA'S HISTORY:

- | | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------|---|
| 1967 | The first regional chapter of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) was established in Calgary. | 1995 | Instrumental in leading and shaping the now world-famous wildlife crossing structures in Banff National Park. |
| 1971 | Helped defeat the Prairie River Improvement Plan, which would have diverted water from northern Alberta watersheds to the southern part of the province. | 1996 | The Banff Bow Valley Study on Ecological Integrity resulted in caps on commercial development in Banff National Park. |
| 1972 | Helped defeat a large-scale development and Olympic bid in Banff National Park. | 1997 | Environmental education program began. CPAWS SAB is the only chapter with this unique program. |
| 1975 | Fish Creek Park was established, with the support of the NPPAC. | 1998 | Elbow-Sheep Wildland and Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Parks were established. |
| 1980 | Nose Hill Park, initially proposed by Harvey Buckmaster (NPPAC), was designated as a protected area. | 1999 | Defeated the proposed and flawed Alberta Natural Heritage Act. |
| 1985 | The NPPAC was renamed the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). | 1999 | Pressed for the Kananaskis Country Recreational Development Policy, which defined the region and its land use policy. |
| 1988 | Influenced an amendment to the National Parks Act, which included wording to prioritize ecological integrity first in park management. | 1999 | Intervened to prevent exploratory well drilling in the Whaleback. Bob Creek Wildland Provincial Park and the Black Creek Heritage Rangeland were established. |
| 1992-3 | Helped protect the Wind Valley from development. | 2000 | Protected the Spray Valley from a major resort development. Spray Valley Provincial Park was established. |
| 1993 | Helped found the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative. | 2003 | Influenced the twinning plans for the 12.5 Km section of the TransCanada east of Lake Louise. |
| 1994 | Hired the first staff position. | | |



AREAS CPAWS SOUTHERN ALBERTA HELPED TO PROTECT

Black Creek Heritage Rangeland

Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park

Bob Creek Wildland Provincial Park

Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park

Castle Provincial Park

Castle Wildland Provincial Park

Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park

Elbow-Sheep Wildland Provincial Park

Fish Creek Provincial Park

Nose Hill Park

Sheep River Provincial Park

Spray Valley Provincial Park

- | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 2003 | Advised federal officials on environmental mitigation for G8 Summit Legacy wildlife crossing structures in the Bow Valley. | 2013 | Pressured Parks Canada to ensure Sunshine Village's proposed Goat's Eye Mountain day lodge development required to meet national park water quality standards. |
| 2004 | Spray Valley and Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Parks were expanded. | 2014 | Seasonal mandatory travel restrictions were implemented on the Bow Valley Parkway. |
| 2006 | Grizzly bear hunt suspended. | 2014 | Defeated the proposed Maligne Lake hotel. |
| 2007 | Produced a documentary entitled, <i>Shooting the Gap: Wildlife and the TransCanada Highway in Banff National Park</i> . | 2014 | Influenced <i>The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)</i> , which increased protection of the Eastern Slopes. |
| 2008 | Won the Alberta Emerald Award for education program. | 2015 | Environmental education program reached the 100,000 student milestone. |
| 2009 | CPAWS Calgary/Banff was renamed CPAWS Southern Alberta Chapter. | 2016 | <i>Alberta Recreation Study</i> produced, showing the majority of Albertans participate in outdoor recreation, and support protecting wilderness. |
| 2010 | Grizzly bears listed as threatened species under the Alberta Wildlife Act. | 2016 | Won the award of excellence for Outstanding Non-Profit Organization for environmental education from the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM). |
| 2011 | Over 100,000 emails sent to the Premier, demanding increased protection of the Castle Special Place. | 2017 | Castle Provincial Park was created, and the Castle Wildland Provincial Park was expanded. |
| 2011 | Stopped Bill 29, which would have undermined Alberta's parks and protected Areas. | 2017 | Released the <i>Envisioning a Better Way Forward</i> report, which proposed an ecosystem-based approach to forestry on Alberta's Southern Eastern Slopes. |
| 2012 | Logging in the Castle wilderness suspended. | | |

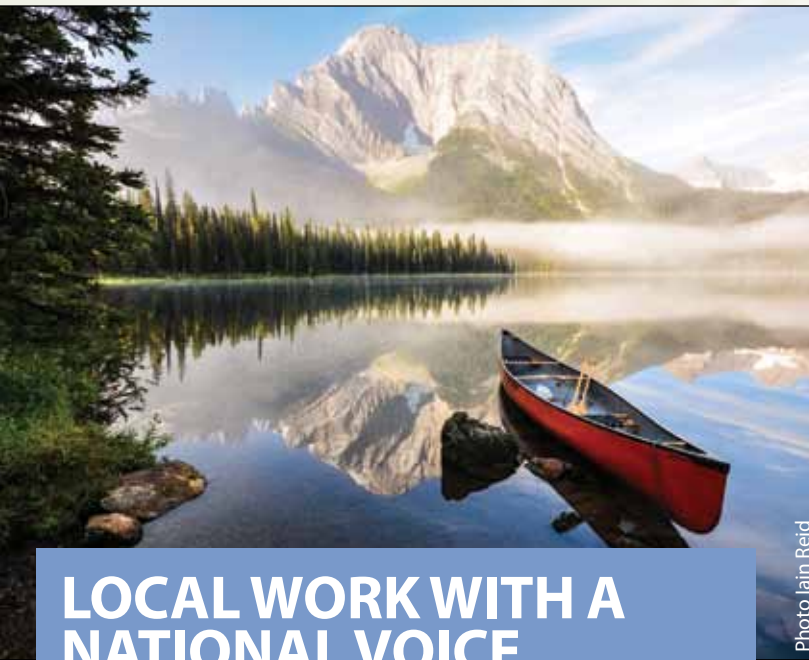


Photo: Iain Reid

LOCAL WORK WITH A NATIONAL VOICE



Harvey Locke

Past Board Chair and National President

Harvey Locke was somewhat tentative when he first attended a Calgary/Banff chapter meeting of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) in the early 1980s.

He thought the NPPAC was a group that was opposed to things, which was not a position Harvey was comfortable taking. By the end of the meeting, Harvey had come to realize that this group was standing up for positive changes.

Harvey began volunteering with the NPPAC, and has been passionate about the organization and conservation issues ever since. As the Calgary/Banff chapter president, Harvey also volunteered as the National VP of Finance, and then the National President. The close relationship between the national and local organizations represents one of the greatest strengths Harvey sees in the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)—and one of the reasons he is still a strong supporter of CPAWS today.

“Having an organization that can work on multiple scales provides flexibility and strength where needed. As a national organization, with local chapters, CPAWS can be effective on multiple scales.”

National organizations are best suited to provide a unified voice on conservation issues across Canada, like national parks. When it comes to working at a local scale, however, local institutions are effective. This scalability sets CPAWS SAB apart from other Alberta conservation organizations. CPAWS is the only nationwide organization with local chapters working to protect half of Canada's public lands and waters.

One of CPAWS' lasting legacies, that Harvey was directly involved with, was founding and supporting the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. Y2Y is a joint Canada-U.S. not-for-profit that connects and protects wildlife habitat along the Yellowstone to Yukon corridor. CPAWS played an important role in the success of the Y2Y initiative by financially supporting them for approximately the first five years.



A TIME OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Wendy Francis

Past Board Chair and Conservation Director

Wendy Francis joined CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) as a volunteer in 1986. “It was a time of significant change. When I started as a volunteer, there were only volunteers. We did some significant things during that time.”

By the mid-1990s, plans emerged for the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway, between the Sunshine interchange and Castle Junction. “We needed to make the case for widespan overpasses,” says Wendy. There were no plans to build the overpasses, yet research showed large carnivores were not using the existing underpasses. Decades later, the Trans-Canada Highway overpasses have been proven successful by increasing habitat connectivity and reducing incidents of road kill.

One of her enduring highlights was the protection of the Whaleback, a campaign that started in 1992, when a number of sour gas wells were proposed in the area.

“We had a classic campaign—media releases, postcard campaign,” says Wendy. The province's Energy Resources Conservation Board held hearings in the summer of 1994 and by fall turned down the application. In 1999, the Nature Conservancy bought rights in the Bob Creek area (formerly Whaleback), and the province created a provincial park.

They aren't making any more wilderness, and what remains needs to be defended.

By 1996, Wendy approached then board chair Michael Going, and proposed that CPAWS SAB hire her as their first Conservation Director. Michael told her if she could raise the funds to pay for the position, she could have it. Wendy raised the money, and stayed in the position until March 1999.

Wendy remembers her time with CPAWS as “exciting” and full of public engagement.

CPAWS SAB is as relevant as it ever has been, if not more so, she says.

“They aren't making any more wilderness, and what remains needs to be defended. The pressure from industrial and recreational development is relentless, and nature needs defenders who are knowledgeable and fearless.

“CPAWS has accumulated a wealth of scientific and strategic knowledge that can be deployed against these forces. Alberta right now is a great place to be taking advantage of a government, perhaps only there for a short term, that sees the bigger picture of the balance between nature protection and human enterprise.”



Photo: Adam Ford

A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND URGENCY



Dave Poulton
Past Executive Director

Dave Poulton was a young lawyer when he got involved with CPAWS Southern Alberta (CPAWS SAB).

“When I got involved in the 1990s, it had quite a loose structure,” he said. “It was driven by volunteers; it was a work of the heart.”

After chairing the board of directors, he was hired in 1999 as Conservation Director, the most senior staff position at the time. Dave led CPAWS SAB through a transformation, seeing that with CPAWS SAB’s growing ambition there was need for more full-time staff. In 2000, when the Executive Director position was created, he applied for the position and was hired, staying in that role until 2008.

Dave says he was there to celebrate the fruits of much of the labour done by his predecessor as Conservation Director, Wendy Francis. The first overpasses and underpasses on the Trans-Canada Highway in Banff were the results of her earlier efforts. So, when the highway was to be twinned between Castle Junction and Lake Louise, it was much easier for Dave to make the argument, as the big battles had already been won.

If there is one crowning achievement from his time, it was protection of lands in Kananaskis Country, including the creation of Spray Valley Provincial Park. The Spray Valley protection was

significant as it blocked the development of a large resort that would have seen a hotel, golf course, and ski hill disrupt a prime wildlife corridor.

There was both a sense of accomplishment and yet a sense that there was still much more to do.

As the organization added staff, the dependence on volunteers declined. Having more paid staff has given CPAWS SAB more structure and discipline, allowing the organization to become more proactive rather than reacting to events in the moment, says Dave. That said, he misses some of the passion and joy that came from the volunteers.

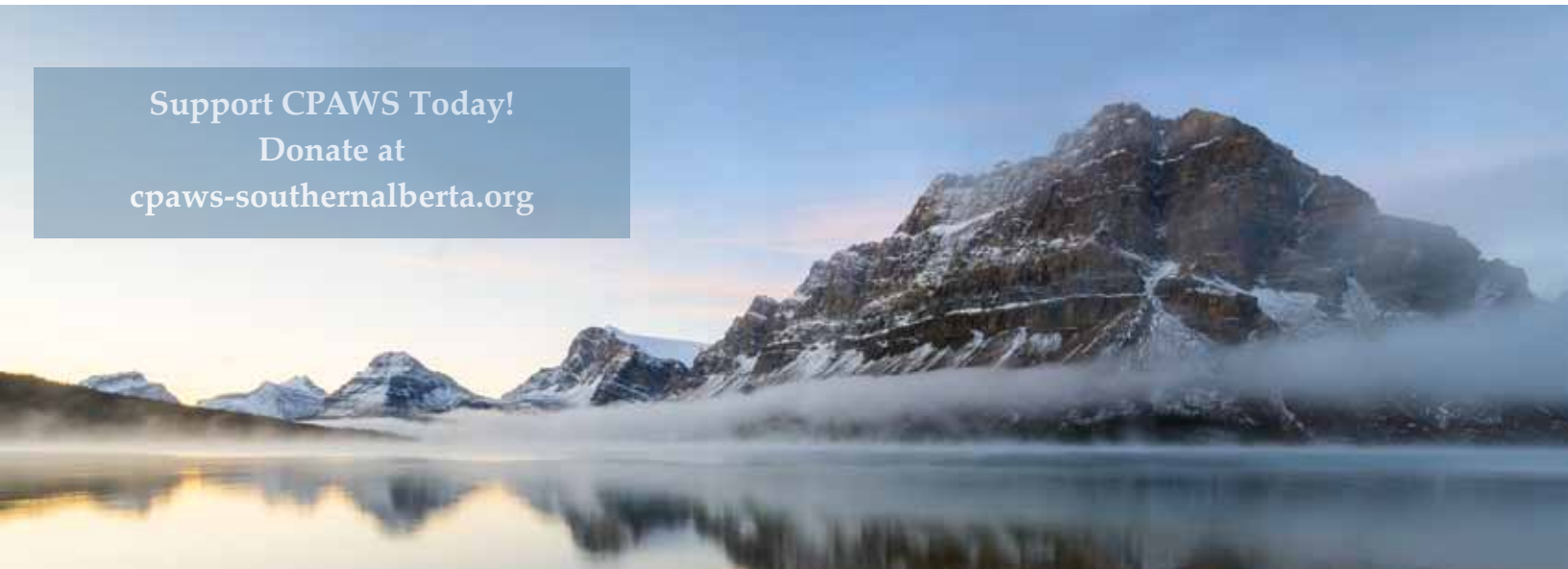
CPAWS’ work, he says, is as vital now as ever.

“As the human population increases and people seek to improve the quality of their lives, the pressure on land and other resources will continue to grow. It is not a given that our natural ecosystems can survive.

“Our efforts at environmental protection have to improve in many ways. One of the foundation stones in that effort is a strong system of parks and protected areas, where nature can function according to its own dynamics.

“In the mosaic that is the Canadian environmental movement, CPAWS plays a critical role, as the constant voice for the maintenance, growth, and integrity of our parks and protected areas.”

Support CPAWS Today!
Donate at
cpaws-southernalberta.org





EDUCATION AS A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION TOOL



Gareth Thomson
Past Education Director

Gareth Thomson was a volunteer with CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) in 1997 when he saw a gap in environmental education.

Recognizing an important opportunity, Gareth proposed an education program designed to engage students in conservation. The board liked his idea, and told him that if he could raise the funds they would support this new program, and the role of Education Director.

He raised the funds and launched "Why the Y2Y"—the first CPAWS SAB education program. His goal was to increase engagement and conservation through multiple classroom visits, and on-site education in areas like Spray Lakes and Mount Yamnuska.

The education program has since become an important strategic tool in CPAWS SAB's conservation efforts. It educates people about issues that are important, but not always urgent, preparing students to take action when the need is there.

For Gareth, some of the most rewarding experiences were when

he saw students engaging in wilderness protection through acts like letter writing, based on their learning and experiences.

One of the outstanding examples of youth engagement was in the late 1990s when students found an abandoned couch dumped in the Yamnuska area. The students gathered around for a photo and shared this image with the media. The government listened, and shortly after vehicle use was restricted, and a new access trail to Yamnuska was built.

Another success was when students expressed concern about development in the Spray Valley. The provincial government received more than 1,000 letters, asking for protection of the Spray Valley. Many of these letters came from students who had attended education programs in the area.

In both these cases, the students engaged out of concern after they had learned about the issues and experienced the area. Gareth sees "the focus on education, over time, that leads to action" as a strength in the CPAWS education program. It is a strength that helps CPAWS to stand out among Alberta's environmental education programs.



Photo: Van Christou



VOLUNTEERISM: THE LIFEBLOOD OF CPAWS



Tina Barzo

Past Outreach Director

As the Outreach Director for CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) from 2002-2006, Tina Barzo worked closely to recruit and support volunteers.

"CPAWS SAB was a constant hub of volunteer activity," she says.

In these volunteers, Tina witnessed the passion for conservation that continues to be the lifeblood of CPAWS SAB.

Core groups of volunteers hashed out strategies and doled out work as part of various CPAWS committees. Volunteers staffed displays at folk festivals and other community events. They were a positive, personable force in engaging and educating the public.

CPAWS volunteers also contributed a significant amount of work

behind the scenes, assisting with newsletters, office administration, and serving on the board of directors. They were always eager to join in when hands-on opportunities like fence removal, hiking, or classroom visits with the education team came up.

The CPAWS SAB volunteer program was one of the first to use the internet to engage volunteers. Volunteers were a driving force within the organization, and bucked a growing trend in episodic volunteerism. The long-term dedication of volunteers was impressive, despite the challenge of conservation campaigns taking years to show results.

Now, as the Leader of Volunteer Engagement for Banff National Park, Tina Barzo fondly reflects on the opportunities she had while working with the CPAWS SAB volunteer program. The passion, positive energy, and dedication she witnessed remains in her memory of CPAWS SAB.



Photo: William Matheson

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: GORD JAMES

Gord James

Outgoing Chair

Shortly after retiring in 2005, Gord James began volunteering with CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB). Starting with simple jobs around the office, he eventually joined, and chaired, the board of directors.

Volunteers like Gord have always played an important role in helping to increase CPAWS SAB's capacity. The impact CPAWS volunteers make is something that has continually impressed Gord.

"CPAWS constantly punches above our weight. People think we must be a large organization, based on the work that we do. They are surprised to find out how small we actually are."

Gord has made the decision to step down from the board of directors this year, but will continue as a volunteer for the

chapter. We want to pay tribute to his significant contribution as a volunteer, and board chair, over the years.

One of the main reasons Gord volunteered with CPAWS SAB was his strong belief in the value of environmental education. Each year he anticipates the arrival of the education report, celebrating the successes of CPAWS' award-winning programs.

"Environmental education helps with awareness, and CPAWS education program creates good citizens and environmental leaders. The program helps people to get involved."



To volunteer with CPAWS Southern Alberta, please visit:
www.cpaaws-southernalberta.org/about/jobs/volunteer



Photo: CPAWS SAB

20 YEARS OF INNOVATIVE EDUCATION



By Jaclyn Angotti
Education Director

Over the last twenty years, getting outside and connecting with the natural environment has become increasingly important.

CPAWS Southern Alberta's (SAB) environmental education programs do just that: connect people with nature, facilitate learning and experience of wilderness conservation and, promote stewardship of our community. 2017 marks our 20th anniversary of delivering innovative education programs to over 118,000 people and counting.

Our education programs are innovative because they directly tie back to our work in conservation. Participants learn science concepts through local case studies that are unfolding before their eyes, like our work with Castle Park, grizzly bear recovery, or the re-introduction of Bison into Banff National Park. CPAWS SAB is unique among environmental education providers because we are concurrently involved in conservation science and teaching about it.

In our school-based programs, youth have the opportunity to explore environmental concepts both inside and outside the classroom. They investigate local issues using biofacts, newspaper articles, videos, games, activities, and field studies in local Alberta parks (many that CPAWS SAB worked to protect!). Few other environmental education programs in southern Alberta offer the prolonged learning experience that CPAWS SAB

does, with this combination of multi-visit in-class programs and outdoor education. Our dedicated fund development efforts ensure that all our programs are affordable. We have developed many resources, which are freely available on our website, as we believe everyone should have access to relevant, science-based environmental education material.

In many cases, a CPAWS SAB hike is a student's first venture into a wilderness environment.

In many cases, a CPAWS SAB hike is a student's first venture into a wilderness environment. We believe that people need to experience and understand nature to connect to their local community. We hope that these connections will inspire them to take action and become stewards of the environment. This is the core tenant of why we do what we do.

A unique component of our youth education programs is the Action Challenge. Each year we give out a select number of Action Awards to classes that demonstrate extraordinary environmental stewardship. Action projects vary from fundraising campaigns, to writing letters to the government, to outstanding awareness campaigns. Our programs go beyond just teaching concepts to creating inspiring experiences to help connect participants to nature and open the door to caring.

This extends beyond the classroom to include adult programming, and most recently, our new immigrant programs. We work closely with Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society to use our education programs to help new immigrants adjust and integrate into their new community. This summer we launched an exciting new opportunity for newcomers to Canada: an interpretive hiking experience in Fish Creek Provincial Park. This immersive experience—in a local park—connects adult new immigrants to nature, builds confidence and skills to spend time outdoors, and helps shape a stewardship ethic in Calgary's growing new immigrant population.

Our awards and continued success, with increased demand for our programs, prove that our innovative approach is needed, desired, and effective. In August 2016, we received the prestigious award of excellence for outstanding non-profit organization contributing to environmental education from the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and



Photo: CPAWS SAB



Photo: CPAWS SAB

Communication (EECOM). We earned an Alberta Emerald Award for Excellence in 2008.

Our 20 years of experience has helped us create powerful, real life connections that excite and captivate learners about the awesomeness of nature.

We have much to look forward to over the next 20 years. We are engaging in the Government of Alberta's curriculum development process, advocating for environmental education to become a deeper component of our province's curriculum. We look forward to the changes that will come, and to supporting teachers integrating the changes in their classrooms.

With the launch of the Government of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan, we have another opportunity to make positive change. Jointly with CPAWS Northern Alberta, we will receive a Community Environment Action Grant in support of our Climate Change Champions project. We aim to build awareness and understanding about climate change concepts, increase awareness about the importance of undisturbed landscapes for climate change mitigation, and inspire personal action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We hope you can join us in our journey over the next 20 years and beyond! To support our Education Department, or for more information about our programs, please contact us at education@cpaws.org, 403-232-6686 or check out our website: <http://cpaws-southernalberta.org/campaigns/education>.



To support our environmental education programs please visit:
www.cpaws-southernalberta.org/campaigns/education



Photo: Victor Liu



By Katie Morrison
Conservation Director

REFLECTING, WHILE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A big part of the conservation work I do with CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) is travelling to amazing wilderness areas and communities throughout the region; getting out on the land; meeting with people; and finding common solutions for wildlife conservation, watersheds protection, and land-use issues.

One of my favourite views during these drives is on the Cowboy Trail from Calgary, to Black Diamond, to the Crowsnest Pass. To me it represents Alberta's history and natural heritage. The open grasslands transitioning into forests, and up to rocky alpine peaks—dotted by the big city and small rural communities—embodies the great beauty and diversity of our province, both in nature and people. Driving the open highway, listening to Ian Tyson or John Wort Hannam, I can envision where we have come from, and where we are going.

As we celebrate our 50th year at CPAWS SAB, we are reflecting on our many successes, and looking to future ones. This past year we experienced some interesting challenges that were marked by greater gains. I would like to share a few highlights and some exciting work looking forward.

We have not seen this level of conversation about conservation in Alberta for many years.

The Castle

The recent designation of the Castle Parks, and the campaign ensuring the Castle Management Plan prioritizes nature, was successful, but also one of our most challenging recent campaigns. CPAWS SAB played a large role in providing recommendations for the draft Management Plan, sitting on a multi-stakeholder government advisory committee, and engaging Albertans in supporting science-based conservation measures—including the phase-out of motorized vehicles from the parks.

This work created a positive public conversation about the Castle, the meaning of protected areas, and the value of public lands. We have not seen this level of conversation about conservation in Alberta for many years. We are encouraged to

build on this momentum in protecting and prioritizing nature in other Southern Alberta wilderness areas.

Public Lands

CPAWS SAB is playing a leadership role in the Porcupine Hills Coalition. For over two years we have been working together with ranchers, landowners, local stewardship groups, recreationalists, municipal governments, and private and public land conservation organizations, using common values to achieve conservation objectives.

We have worked collaboratively on the government plan to implement strong recreation management strategies, and to reduce the human footprint in the Porcupine Hills and Livingstone regions. These strategies include conserving water, wildlife, and quiet recreation areas, while also designating more appropriate areas for motorized recreation. This work follows the impactful Alberta wide recreation study that was commissioned by CPAWS, showing that 76% of all Albertans are engaging in recreation on the landscape.

A New Model for Forest Management

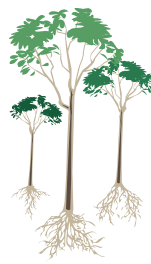
The release of a CPAWS SAB's *Envisioning a Better Way Forward* report looking at a new model for forest management is drawing attention as a solutions-based approach to forest management on the Eastern Slopes. We will continue to look at strengthening legislation and policy supporting sustainable practices that prioritize headwater health and ecosystem values in this region.

Collaboration

Collaboration within the conservation community is a key to success. This year we initiated a project for improving the health of the Southern Eastern Slopes of the Rockies, bringing together 13 conservation non-government organizations (NGOs) to create a collective vision. This unique project draws on the collective knowledge of local conservation groups and scientists to identify the ecological priorities and greatest threats to the Southern Eastern Slopes. By all pulling in the same direction, we are creating a plan to implement conservation actions that achieve greater gains in the Southern Eastern Slopes.

Looking Forward

Looking forward, we will stay rooted in our collaborative, science-based work, challenging ourselves to find creative solutions to land and water issues through protected areas and nature-based land management. For example, Alberta has



committed to meeting the international target of 17 percent protected land by 2020. CPAWS SAB is ready to lead the charge of support to meet, and beat, this target. To reach this, we as Albertans need to vocally support new parks and conservation measures that protect all the provincial eco-regions, from grasslands, to parklands, to headwaters forests.

We are also turning our sights to Kananaskis, Calgary's beloved quiet recreation destination, to explore a new vision that truly protects the region's wildlife, water, and communities. We plan to encourage stewardship and support for these cherished places by strengthening our connection with other outdoor recreationalists who use and love them.

We travelled a long road over the past 50 years, but there are still many peaks and valleys ahead. There are still many places we can go on our path towards a healthy Southern Alberta landscape. We are ready for the challenge. Who knows, I may even discover a few new inspiring places in my Alberta travels this coming year.



To support our conservation work please click the donate button on: www.cpaaws-southernalberta.org/

ALBERTANS NEED CPAWS SAB



Phil Nykyforuk
Incoming Chair

Many people, like myself, come to Alberta to pursue a job opportunity, and stay for the natural splendor that surrounds and embraces us.

Our backyard has mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, clean water, foothills, grasslands and abundant wildlife. Visitors come from all over the world in great numbers to explore what many of us take for granted.

I began volunteering for CPAWS Southern Alberta (SAB) in the 1990s, and saw as the Whaleback and the Spray Valley were protected from industrial and commercial development. CPAWS SAB played a key role in protecting these areas through respectful science-based conservation and collaboration with other stakeholders.

Many protected areas that we enjoy in southern Alberta are the result of the tireless efforts, over many years, made by CPAWS' staff and volunteers. These achievements continue today, most recently with the protection of the Castle region earlier this year.

Although the threats and challenges to our wild spaces are many, CPAWS SAB is ready to tackle them for the next 50 years. Albertans need CPAWS SAB to advocate for new protected areas and for the better management of existing ones. CPAWS needs Albertans to join us, support us, and be voices for conservation. With your help and support, the future is bright!

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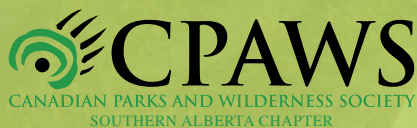
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