

Resolutions passed at BC Nature 2011 AGM, Williams Lake

Resolutions Committee: Dick Stace-Smith and Anne Murray

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Resolution 2011-01 Cat Licensing

Submitted by Victoria Natural History Society

WHEREAS cats that roam free, whether owned, stray, or feral, kill birds and other wildlife, including endangered species; and

WHEREAS free-roaming cats spread disease to other cats, wildlife, and humans; and

WHEREAS free-roaming cats often lead short, traumatic, and painful lives; and

WHEREAS as part of BC Nature's role as a steward of this province's biological diversity, it is incumbent upon us to be doing all we can to preserve and protect our region's wildlife; and

WHEREAS many communities in other provinces have already recognized the importance of responsible pet ownership and have extended pet requirements to cover cats as well as dogs. These communities include, but are not limited to, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Toronto; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the BC Union of Municipalities to implement cat licensing, as well as control and restraint ordinances, to help ensure that cats receive the care and protection they deserve. Progressive provisions found in ordinances should include the following:

- Requirement for all cats to be licensed;
- Mandatory spay/neuter of all cats over six months of age, unless owner purchases annual intact permit and/or breeders permit. Medical exemptions can be offered;
- Requirement for all cats to be vaccinated against rabies; and
- Cats must be confined to their owner's property or physically restrained when off the premises.

Resolution 2011 - 02 Provincial legislation to provide property tax incentives for those wishing to protect their own property from development

Submitted by Victoria Natural History Society

WHEREAS private land owners who choose to protect high quality ecosystems for perpetuity by conservation covenant are not eligible for property tax relief unless the property is in certain Gulf Islands, Ontario or Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS Nova Scotia has enacted the Conservation Property Tax Exemption Act to reward conservation land owners who legally protect their property with property tax reductions; and

WHEREAS the province of B.C. has enacted legislation, The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP), in the Islands Trust area, that provides a substantial annual property tax reduction to covenant private land on certain Gulf Islands; and

WHEREAS the province of Ontario has enacted the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program; and

WHEREAS protecting private land with conservation values, even if the public has no access, benefits the entire region by providing habitat for flora and fauna, as well a host of "green infrastructure" services, such as storm water reduction and pollution absorption-services that would cost the municipality (and tax-payer) if the land were developed; and

WHEREAS encouraging private landowners to protect their land is an important part of conserving ecosystems in any region; and

WHEREAS property tax incentives for private land protected by legal covenant are a tool that has been successful in other jurisdictions, at very low cost to the public, and seems to be a win-win situation that governments should encourage; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the Union of BC Municipalities, municipalities and the Provincial Government to enact legislation to provide property tax incentives to those private land owners who wish to protect their land and its features by covenant from future development.

Resolution 2011-03 Pink Mountain

Submitted by Burke Mountain Naturalists

WHEREAS The plateau area of Pink Mountain (elevation 1700 plus meters, alpine tundra ecosystem, subvariant unknown, 180 km northwest of Fort St. John) supports a rare community of plants including at least one red-listed plant which is the only known occurrence in BC, and ten blue-listed plants, of which two are the most southern known location in BC; and

WHEREAS The limestone shales exposed on the southern portion of the plateau which supports this unique plant community are not known to exist elsewhere in the region at an elevation where soil can form; and

WHEREAS The adjacent 98 hectare Pink Mountain Provincial park, located down slope on the west side and created in 1999 primarily to protect a significant fossil site that contains examples of large fauna from the Mesozoic, does not have appropriate boundaries to protect the unique plant community; and

WHEREAS The plateau area also supports rare arctic butterfly species which do not appear to be adequately (if at all) protected by the existing boundaries of Pink Mountain Provincial Park; and

WHEREAS Road access to the plateau area of Pink Mountain goes directly through this sensitive area to reach a gas well/extraction facility and any further widening or upgrade of this road would threaten this rare plant community; and

WHEREAS The plateau currently has five Telus microwave towers, within the sensitive southern portion of the plateau, which have already severely disturbed this plant community; and

WHEREAS The plateau is proposed to become the site of an Aeolis wind tower farm with up to a 400 MW capacity; and

WHEREAS The provincial park allows snowmobile traffic in winter and hunting and, thus, does not provide full protection for any small alpine plants that may be located within its boundaries; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature request the Minister of Environment and Minister of Natural Resource Operations to declare the southern plateau area of Pink Mountain an Ecological Reserve or an expansion of the existing Pink Mountain provincial park, to fully protect the unique assemblage of plants found there. The estimated size of the protected areas could be 3-10 square kilometers, dependent on further study and the determination of the location of sensitive plants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BC Nature request the Minister of Environment and Minister of Natural Resource Operations to ensure that there is no further expansion of the microwave towers' footprint, and that additional upgrades to the existing road are prohibited, in order to protect the remaining plants which are immediately adjacent to the road; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any wind towers on the plateau, if permitted, should be located only on the northern portion of the site, where these unique plants do not occur, and should be serviced by a new access road that will avoid the smaller southern portion of the plateau; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Friends of Ecological Reserves, Telus, Aeolis Wind Inc., Canadian Natural Gas and Treaty 8 First Nations.

Resolution 2011-04 Raven Underground Coal Mine Project adjacent to Baynes Sound, Vancouver Island.

Submitted by Arrowsmith Naturalists Club

WHEREAS the Raven Mine in the Fanny Bay area of Baynes Sound is the first of at least two coal mines proposed by Comox Joint Venture, owned by Compliance Coal Corporation and Asian investors; and

WHEREAS coal products from the proposed RUC Project would contribute to greenhouse gases and would undermine citizen and government efforts to reduce emissions, to protect water resources and sensitive ecosystems; and

WHEREAS acid mine drainage from the RUC Project risks contaminating surface water, local aquifers and the waters of Baynes Sound; and

WHEREAS local aquifers are largely unmapped and the consequences of contamination are unknown, but have the potential to pollute water supplies and the marine environment and an unknown wider area under which, and through which the aquifers flow; and

WHEREAS the waters of Baynes Sound yield BC's most profitable shellfishery (generating \$22 million annually), as well as a significant herring fishery and valuable salmon runs, thereby providing over 500 local jobs; and

WHEREAS Baynes Sound and its estuarine environment has been designated as an Important Bird Area of continental and global significance to protect significant bird species and the habitat and ecosystems on which they depend; and

WHEREAS the footprint of the proposed project abuts identified biodiversity corridors and the sensitive habitat of federally-listed Species at Risk (the Western Toad, Red-legged Frog), as well as BC red and blue-listed species (Roosevelt Elk, Coastal Cutthroat Trout, Water Shrew, Purple Martin, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Pacific Sideband Snail); and

WHEREAS scientific studies reveal public health issues associated with living in proximity to coal mines, including higher risks of cardiopulmonary disease, chronic lung disease, hypertension and kidney disease; and

WHEREAS the planned method of transporting the coal will be by trucks which will operate around the clock, traveling over narrow, winding roads and through the heart of Cathedral Grove to Port Alberni, while possibly causing significant impacts on both the structural integrity of the highways and for traffic and emergency vehicles which also use this route; and

WHEREAS this transportation route is the sole public road access to several provincial parks and the Pacific Rim National Park; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature insists that the appropriate agencies of the Provincial Government undertake a thorough mapping of the aquifers in the areas impacted by such a mine as an initial step in assessing the environmental impacts of the project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BC Nature request that the Federal and Provincial Governments appoint a joint Federal/Provincial independent expert review panel, with full public hearings, to compile a thorough environmental assessment of the project, including the possible impact of this project on both federally-listed Species at Risk, on BC red and blue-listed species, on the aquatic resources of the area, on the health of the public, and on the usage of, and accessibility to both provincial and national parks; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the Provincial Government departments responsible to assess the implications for wildlife impacts and road safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be communicated to Nature Canada to enlist their action on this matter, as well as relevant MPs and MLAs, the First Nations Leadership Council, the Assembly of First Nations, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the Georgia Strait Alliance.

Resolution 2011–05 Boundary expansion of Spiipiyus Provincial Park

Submitted by Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society

WHEREAS the Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society in 1991 was instrumental in the creation of Friends of Caren, an advocacy group which went on to urge the BC Government to bring Spiipiyus Provincial Park into being; and

WHEREAS Friends of Caren, on the 28th day of October 1996, the day the new park was announced, handed a note to the BC Government urging them to expand the boundaries of Spiipiyus Provincial Park, stating that the park was not viable and sustainable with the existing boundaries, given the difficulties of accommodating the needs of recreationists and conservationists harmoniously; and

WHEREAS there is now a proposal by the Sechelt Indian Nation to create a large conservation area just to the south of Spiipiyus Provincial Park, known as the Spiipiyus-Swiya Conservation Area; and

WHEREAS there have been several proposals put forward for the expansion of Spiipiyus Provincial Park before and since its creation, including the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the Land for Nature Program of the FBCN (BC Nature); therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the federal and provincial governments to create a larger Provincial or National Park on the Caren Range, to encompass the Spiipiyus Provincial Park, which is a national treasure because of its unique ecology, incorporating Canada's oldest closed canopy forests and habitat for several important wildlife species such as the marbled murrelet, with the intention of making the park large enough to reach the ocean shores of the Sechelt Inlet and to meet the needs of the Sechelt First Nation, the people of the Sunshine Coast, British Columbia and Canada in perpetuity.

2011-06 Resolution on recreational activities in Wildlife Management Areas and conservation areas of the Fraser River delta

Submitted by Delta Naturalists' Society

WHEREAS that the Fraser River delta is unique in Canada due to its large and globally significant migratory bird populations, and its importance as a winter habitat for tens of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds, and the most important area of Canada for wintering raptors; and

WHEREAS much of the land that was formerly important bird habitat is being used for highways, rail operations, warehouses and storage facilities for containers, airport expansion, large mansions and estates, greenhouse operations, etc.; and

WHEREAS one of Canada`s largest and most populous and rapidly growing urban areas is located in the Fraser River delta; and

WHEREAS several provincial Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) including Boundary Bay, Serpentine Fen, Sturgeon Bank, South Arm Marshes and the proposed WMA at Roberts Bank, and federal conservation areas (Sea Island Conservation Area, Alaksen National Wildlife Area) are located in the Fraser River delta; and

WHEREAS with increased numbers of residents there is an exponentially higher demand for recreational use in Wildlife Management Areas and conservation areas; and

WHEREAS many recreational pursuits within the WMA are in direct conflict with the activities of migratory birds, such as feeding, sleeping, and resting, and therefore alienate the birds from their critical habitat; and

WHEREAS there are currently no public use regulations on recreation within WMAs and the Sea Island Conservation Area

WHEREAS migratory birds, the control of shipping and boating, and the tidal areas of Boundary Bay are all federal responsibilities (Environment Canada and Transport Canada) and jurisdiction over WMAs is a provincial responsibility; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that B.C. Nature urge the BC Minister of forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the federal Minister of Environment and federal Minister of Transportation to begin immediate work together to better protect migratory birds within the provincial WMAs of the Fraser River delta, including Boundary Bay, Serpentine, Sturgeon Bank, South Arm Marshes and the proposed WMA at Roberts Bank, by enacting and strongly enforcing regulations concerning recreational activities such as: motorised boating, kite- and para- surfing, para-buggies and carts, wind-surfing, target shooting, kayaking, and running off-leash dogs, all of which alienate migratory birds from habitats specifically set aside for them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that B.C. Nature urge the federal Minister of Environment to better protect migratory birds within the federally-owned Sea Island Conservation Area by enacting and strongly enforcing regulations concerning such activities as off-leash dogs, which alienate migratory birds from habitats specifically set aside for them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such regulations include the creation of sanctuary areas within the WMAs where none of the above-mentioned activities are ever permitted.

Resolution 2011-07 Curtailing bycatch from gillnet fisheries in the southern Strait of Georgia

Submitted by Delta Naturalists' Society

WHEREAS For the last few years the great decline of Fraser River salmon stock has curtailed commercial fishing activities in the southern Strait of Georgia; and

WHEREAS a few years ago following a good salmon run, over 900 dead seabirds were counted in the Point Roberts, Washington State, South Delta and Boundary Bay, Delta, B.C. area in one season's survey of beached birds; and

WHEREAS autopsies by Environment Canada at that time determined the cause of this seabird mortality to be death by drowning, with a probable cause of gillnet entanglement; and

WHEREAS an abundant Fraser River run of sockeye in 2010, caused sea bird bycatch to once again become a problem, with over 100 Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot and Rhinoceros Auklets washing up on the beaches of Point Roberts, Washington State, South Delta and Boundary Bay, Delta, B.C; and

WHEREAS there has been a continuing occurrence of bird wrecks in the southern Strait of Georgia during the salmon fishery; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that B.C. Nature urge the Canadian Minister of Environment, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department, the Director of the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Department, and other transboundary organizations working in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound, to work together to put an end to the killing of migratory birds as a bycatch of the gill net fishery in the southern Strait of Georgia.

Resolution 2011 - 08 Transboundary Species

Submitted by Vermilion Forks Naturalists

WHEREAS BC has the highest number of species (wildlife and plants) of any province in Canada, and this biodiversity of species is shared with other jurisdictions, both in Canada and the USA; and

WHEREAS these transboundary species make up 96% of the total biodiversity of BC and do not recognize boundaries; and

WHEREAS global warming is now an increasing threat affecting many species; and

WHEREAS BC has taken some steps to tackle climate change but recognition must be given to the urgent need that laws be created to protect BC's imperiled species and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS without effective, cohesive protective measures on both sides of boundaries, BC would be biologically degraded; and

WHEREAS already at least 1918 species of distinct populations of wildlife/plants are at risk, due to loss of large portions of critical habitat needed for their survival; and

WHEREAS in 1996, federal, provincial (including BC) and territorial governments in Canada signed "The National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the government of BC to re-affirm their commitments made in 1992, 1993 and 1996, on a national and international stage, to conserve biodiversity, a common concern of humankind, as stated at "The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity," or CBD.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BC Nature urge the BC government to recognize that the patchwork of current legislation does not adequately protect species at risk, e.g. protection of habitat and other issues are not included; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BC Nature requests that the current government improve coordination of conservation of habitat and species at risk between BC and other transboundary jurisdictions.