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Executive Reports

CONSERVATION REPORT for May 15, 2004 AGM

- Bev Ramey
- with help from Eva Durance on Parks and Protected Areas

This past year has been busy with an increasing number of issues. The strength of FBCN is our great depth of grassroot, volunteer members who are involved and knowledgeable on local habitats.

Provincial Parks and Ecological Reserves

Following the Recreation Stewardship Panel Report, day use parking fees were introduced in summer 2003 for 28 Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island Provincial Parks. Unfortunately we have not seen the implementation of any of the positive recommendations from the Stewardship Panel (such as government addressing its agreed to responsibility for conservation in the parks, and establishing the public advisory body for Parks promised by Fall 2003). FBCN has continued to raise concerns about the failure to implement the Recreation Stewardship Panel recommendations in several letters and meetings. Summer 2004 will see day use fees implemented in more parks, together with a season Stewardship Pass, the proceeds of which will reportedly go directly back into the Parks, but we haven't yet heard whether this will include the reinstatement of Nature Interpretation Programs.

FBCN provided considerable input to the Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to assist them with preparation of their report for Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, on the future of Nature Interpretation. We participated in four workshops and meetings organized by CPAWS, and reviewed draft reports. CPAWS submitted their resulting report to the BC government in early April 2004.

In an attempt to continue and expand some interpretation programs in some parks, FBCN applied to Human Resources in March for grants for nine students to work in eight provincial parks this summer (Gordon Bay/Newcastle, Goldstream/Sidney Spit, Porteau Cove, Manning, Lac Le Jeune and Scotch Creek). At time of writing this report, three positions have just been approved.

Twice this past year we have written to the BC government expressing concern about the rumour of a reduction in the size of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains (Spruce Lake) Provincial Park. FBCN also participated in a media meeting about the possible deletion of areas from the park.

A successful end to the fight to keep industrial development out of the Nature Conservancy Area of Strathcona Provincial Park was Minister Murray's July 9th announcement that Boliden Mines will not be allowed to draw water for power generation from lakes within the Park.

FBCN continues to support the Cowichan Valley Naturalists and the Nature Conservancy's efforts to work with Weyerhaeuser to protect Eagle Heights grasslands, adjacent to Koksilah River Provincial Park.

FBCN wrote government in December to express concern regarding removal of land from Graham Laurier Provincial Park in northeast BC for oil and gas exploration.

2003/04 has seen almost no public consultation in the preparation of park management plans. This comes as no surprise given the cuts to government staff.

Jeremy McCall attended three workshops with other stakeholders and provincial government staff to formulate a "Lodge Strategy for Parks" (participation was by invitation only).

Ecological Reserves Wardens Gathering

Organized by Eva Durance and Bev Ramey, together with Peggy Frank of Friends of Ecological Reserves, "The Gathering" of volunteer Ecological Reserve Wardens took place in Kamloops on September 5-7, 2003. It was an uplifting event for the 55 people who attended. Clearly, the best protection that our ecological reserves have is the volunteer wardens who watch over them, and who are keepers of their wonders and stories. The Gathering confirmed that the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection does support Wardens. Assistant Deputy Minister Nancy Wilkin stated, "You may have felt stranded and unsupported over the past couple of years, but you are essential to the future." Eva and Peggy, with assistance from others have revised the Warden's Handbook, and have submitted this revision to government for their additions and concurrence. Efforts are underway to improve communication between WLAP staff and wardens. Another positive outcome is a good working relationship between FBCN and Friends, and also that several new Wardens have stepped forward to adopt Reserves. Plans are to hold a Gathering every two years.

Provincial Crown Land

We have continued to raise concerns regarding the sale of Crown land, including a letter to Premier Campbell in August 2003. He replied expressing his confidence in the ability of Land & Water BC to properly tenure and market Crown Land. FBCN also wrote in December to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management over the sale of Lannan Forest in Comox by Land & Water BC. We wrote again in February to new Minister George Abbott, to express our dismay with Land & Water BC's sale of Lannan Forest to a private developer, when the Regional District had wished to purchase the land for park and had offered only \$400,000 less than the developer. Unfortunately with the sealed bid process, the Regional District had no opportunity to negotiate!

FBCN has also written letters twice in the past year on government's proposed Working Forest legislation. This legislation will bring about major changes, the significance of which has received almost no media coverage. Government has proceeded despite the overwhelming opposition. Last spring 97% of the 2,692 people who responded opposed

the Working Forest Initiative. A big concern is that the Working Forest Initiative will allow for privatization of what was once Provincial Forest land

FBCN wrote to the Environmental Assessment Office to oppose the proposed Jumbo Glacier Ski Resort.

West Nile Virus

Following suggestions at the Kamloops 2003 AGM, an educational report on West Nile Virus (WNV) was written for BC Naturalist. The report focused on the importance of natural predators to control mosquito larvae populations in natural wetlands. A good example of government direction is being provided by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) which has taken a leadership and coordinating role. The municipalities of Burnaby and Vancouver hired biologists last summer to inventory natural wetlands, ponds and catch basins (storm run-off drains). This was done to determine which mosquito species (ie only certain species carry WNV) are occurring and where. Inventory work is showing that natural wetlands with permanent water are not usually a problem. These ponds have well established populations of predators of mosquitoes and so mosquito populations were usually low. Catch basins and some ephemeral water bodies (non-permanent water bodies that dry up in summer) do harbor mosquito larvae since mosquito predators are not present. Vegetation along the edges of some of the temporary water bodies (ie ditches) can help reduce mosquito larvae by encouraging predators of larvae. Agitation of pond water by fountain spray also kills larvae.

The GVRD is trying to encourage all its municipalities to take these inventory steps, so that if the virus is found in BC (which is expected this summer), then larvicides will be applied in only those locations where they are needed (eg targeting catch basins). Educational brochures are also being prepared to alert the public to eliminate unwanted, man made standing water on private lands, such as plant pot saucers, old tires, or eave troughs sloped wrong. Only a teaspoon of water is enough for mosquito eggs and larvae to develop. For ponds on private lands, owners can introduce predators of mosquito larvae. For more information check the consultant's website: www.acroloxus.com and look under natural mosquito control.

Steps being undertaken by other Regional Districts are not known at this time. Your natural history club can encourage your municipality to undertake inventory and public education. Of note is that the City of Vancouver is receiving a grant of \$50,000 from the Province to assist with their program. The GVRD states that municipalities are being asked to take a significant responsibility for managing a public health issue, and it is asking senior levels of government for more funding to municipalities to implement the West Nile Virus response plans.

Species at Risk

Good news federally was the proclamation of the Species At Risk Act on June 5, 2003. The prohibition component of SARA will come into effect on June 1, 2004. FBCN representatives have attended two workshop meetings on this.

Most recently FBCN has worked on the Canadian Nature Federation's Nature Network on species at risk to prepare a report card on how well Canada, the provinces and the territories are doing on protecting our species at risk. The conclusion for BC is that we are not doing well, despite good efforts from the few government staff remaining. A failing letter grade of 'F' was given to BC. Cabinet direction and leadership is just not there -- for example, the Identified Wildlife draft 2003 version has still not been adopted by the BC Cabinet, even though it has been completed for about 6 months; our Wildlife Act still lists only four endangered species; and recent changes to forestry laws make endangered species protection subject to maintaining timber supply! The CNF report is scheduled for release in early June.

In preparing the Species at Risk report card for BC, the FBCN chose the Mountain Caribou for our banner species. The Mountain Caribou was chosen because there is the possibility that the population decline can be reversed if correct actions are taken now. To this end, FBCN also sent a letter to the Kootenay-Boundary Higher Land Use planners, to urge that the precautionary approach be followed in planning which areas are to be logged.

Federal Parks and Marine Areas

FBCN has supported the feasibility study for the proposed National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan, the feasibility study for a National Marine Conservation Area in the Southern Strait of Georgia and the consultation process on interim management for the proposed Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area (all announced Oct 2003). FBCN is also supporting the establishment of a Marine Wildlife Area for the Scott Islands and surrounding waters, which includes Triangle Island, off the northwestern tip of Vancouver Island.

Good News - Burns Bog

Burns Bog has finally been protected, through what is perhaps the most lengthy and complicated real estate deal in BC history. FBCN has sent letters of thanks to the federal and provincial governments, and to the GVRD and Delta since all contributed funds. The Mayor of Delta replied, "The land acquired is covered by a Conservation Covenant designed to ensure that the Bog lands are treated as an ecological conservancy. Canada, BC, the GVRD and Delta are at present finalizing Terms of Reference for the management plan. GVRD will be responsible, in the main, for implementation of the plan, with all actions subject to approval by the four partners. In addition, a scientific panel will oversee the management."

Other Activities

FBCN has repeatedly expressed concern over cuts to government staff in parks, wildlife, fish, and forestry staff. The past three years have seen staff cut by one-third, following on cuts of up to 50 percent over the previous seven years. For an excellent documentation of the impacts of these cuts, read "Please Hold. Someone Will Be With You" by the West Coast Environmental Law, and available at web site <http://www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2004/14099.pdf>

FBCN, together with the Vancouver Natural History Society met with the new Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, the Honourable Bill Barisoff, in early March. Topics covered were parks, streamside protection and biodiversity.

FBCN submitted comments in November 2003 on the BC government's draft "Review of Options for Managing Falconry". Comments consisted of a list of thirteen questions sent back to government, together with a statement of nine concerns. No response to our questions or concerns has been received from government.

FBCN initiated several meetings towards protecting Fraser Lowlands sites, including meetings with Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Trust, Sto:lo Nation, and Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

FBCN representative attended the Fraser Basin Council's two workshops to prepare an Invasive Plant Strategy. The report is now complete and organizations are being asked to endorse it. The report can be found at <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/news/index.html>

We have sent letters, in cooperation with local clubs, to:

- Ministry of Forests, Chilliwack to express concern over manner in which logging has occurred at Elk Creek, without road access approved to transport timber.
- GVRD over possible removal of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve on Barnston Island.
- Land & Water BC and Sunshine Coast Regional District on application for Water License on Hotel Lake and impacts on the three-spined stickleback.

In early May 2004, a Federal Review Panel is holding hearings in Vancouver on lifting the moratorium on oil and gas exploration, and Elaine Golds will be making a presentation for FBCN.

Additional conservation work occurs through the numerous committees on which representatives of FBCN and member clubs participate throughout BC. The reports of several representatives are included in this Annual Report.

In conclusion, and looking to the year ahead, for FBCN to provide a strong conservation focus, it is important for clubs to alert their FBCN Director, Conservation Chair, or other members of the Executive Committee about your concerns. Please also provide assistance in letter writing to draw provincial attention to important local issues. FBCN Directors and Regional Coordinators are key people in communicating a timely and knowledgeable conservation voice.

YOUNG NATURALISTS' CLUB of British Columbia

submitted by Daphne Solecki, YNC Co-ordinator

I am pleased to report that the YNC is thriving at this time. There are currently 21 YNCs throughout the province providing monthly explorer days and other activities .

LOWER MAINLAND

Vancouver; Home Learners; Nicomekl (Surrey/Langley); Chilliwack

VANCOUVER ISLAND

North Vancouver Island; Comox Valley;
Oceanside (Parksville/Qualicum);
Nanaimo; Cowichan Valley; Victoria

THOMPSON/OKANAGAN

Lillooet; Kamloops; North Okanagan; Kelowna; South Okanagan

KOOTENAYS

Elk Valley (Fernie); Nelson; West Kootenays (Trail) ;
Boundary (Grand Forks)

NORTH

Prince George; Williams Lake

– if you have friends or relative in these locations please let them know about the YNC. On our website, you can find out more about the wonderful programs the YNC leaders are organising for tomorrow's naturalists – I truly think our young members are among the luckiest children in BC. Because the children are always accompanied by a parent or other adult, YNC reaches two generations at the same time.

Current membership stands at 520 families and 40 Affiliate Members (schools, libraries, and groups). Thus we reach about 1000 children directly through their family membership and many more via schools, libraries, etc.

As some of the clubs have only just come into existence, the overall membership will grow as the new clubs start activities and attract interest in their local community.

The rate of membership renewal has been satisfactory, given that one would expect a higher rate of turnover in a children's organisation than in an adult group. Some local YNC leaders are moving on as their lives change, but so far handover to new leaders has gone smoothly.

Our magazine, NatureWILD, continues to maintain a high standard with contributions from excellent writers from around the province, and attractive appearance created by our production editor, Monica Belko. I know many adults get as much enjoyment from reading NatureWILD as do the children.

In addition to membership fees, which remain at \$15, YNC will always require supplementary funds from outside sources. Funding has gone well this past year with grants from TD Friends of the Environment, Ministry of Water, Land & Air protection,

Imperial Oil Charitable Foundation, the BC Gaming Commission and some very generous individual donors. This funding has enabled YNC to employ an administrative assistant, Laura Moth, two days a week to maintain membership services and to create a how-to reference binder that covers all YNC activities, which will be useful to any future co-ordinators.

Now that YNC is truly province wide our plans for next year include finding a way for YNC to become a separate organisation, while retaining a close relationship with Federation of BC Naturalists, probably sharing the Federation office. Retaining YNC as a project of either the VNHS or FBCN makes it difficult for both organisations to raise funds for other projects.

At the same time that YNC is growing in BC, we have approached the nature federations in other provinces to see if they are interested in adopting the YNC model of nature education for young people, with the ambitious hope of having Young Naturalists' Clubs across Canada, sharing ideas, ideals and resources. So far Alberta and New Brunswick have shown a positive interest. We are waiting for reactions from other provinces.

Finally, tremendous thanks to all who have put so much energy into YNC this past year – the local YNC leaders, the Management Committee – George Bangham, Rob Butler and Jeremy McCall – VNHS Treasurer John Thomson, our generous funders and all those who have volunteered their time to assist in the quarterly mail-outs and other work.

Regional Coordinators Reports

VANCOUVER ISLAND REPORT

By Ron Speller

There was no change in the number of clubs but with the addition of Malaspina Naturalist Club our affiliate group number increased to two; hopefully, the two affiliates will eventually join the senior ranks. Regional meetings were well attended and always with vigorous and interesting rhetoric, and numbered our usual three, spring, fall and winter.

All clubs were involved in a myriad of activities, including advocacy for conservation of natural landscapes and resistance to Land and Water BC's convoluted ideas of public process when dealing with proposed disposition/change of use for crown lands. Young Naturalists Clubs continue to prosper with rising membership and calendars of increased activities.

Membership numbers have stabilized for the Mittlenatch Club and this has afforded them the opportunity to expand their education and social activities. Comox Valley Naturalists continue to participate in a major wetland restoration project. This project shows continued growth and the club has been successful in maintenance of funding and engagement of high school students. Members of Arrowsmith Naturalists again volunteered for daily summer duty at Rath Trevor Provincial Park Visitor Centre, and they noted that management displayed little interest for interpretation programs.

Nanaimo Field Naturalists continue to be engaged in a number of local conservation initiatives at the Nanaimo River estuary and Buttertubs Marsh. Trail making for the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve was a major undertaking for Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club, also, broom bashing on a number of public properties. Outreach and conservation education highlight the year's activities for the Victoria Natural History Society, also, their Green Spaces project continues with members engaged in inventory counts and engaging federal government agencies on the future use of federal crown land in the Victoria area. Rocky Point Bird Observatory had a very successful season and demand continues to grow for their bird banding classes.

The majority of clubs enjoyed successful Christmas Bird counts, with favourable weather cooperation, with Arrowsmith Naturalists establishing a new club record for number of different species observed.

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship project continued with funding from Environment Canada and the Habitat and Conservation Trust Fund. Volunteer numbers grew with interest from the southern Gulf Islands and increased interest from Campbell River. Enhancements continue to be undertaken to the Atlas and a number of information sharing agreements have been completed with local government agencies and a non-government organization. Discussions are underway with a number of parties for stewardship agreements of their property.

The year 2004 will see a change in regional personnel. Elthea, after 7 years as recording secretary has retired, and her successor is Frank Hovenden of the Comox Valley club. Elthea was recognized for her services to the region with a book presentation. The March 2004, meeting was the last for yours truly. After 8 years as regional coordinator it was time for a change and new leadership. As regional coordinator I enjoyed those years, meeting so many interesting people, increasing my appreciation for the natural world and addressing challenging issues. Those years will always be remembered and be a firm part of the naturalist me.

Thompson-Okanagan-Shuswap Regional Report

By Ed McDonald

A primary focus for this region will continue to be the proposed Southern Okanagan National Park. Several of its species of plants, insects, reptiles and amphibians occur nowhere else in Canada and some are unique to the world. It is, therefore, essential that all possible means be used to preserve this habitat since healthy ecosystems ensure our quality of life. The process is at the feasibility study stage and this will take be at least two-years.

Fires in our region are a major concern, and the clubs have agreed to closely monitor the process of succession in the burnt areas and to use a standardized form of recording the results. The North Shuswap Club has already done an inventory of the Chase fire, taking photos to use as a reference in future years. The Kelowna Club has sponsored a workshop called "Making a Difference" to show people how to landscape to conserve water and to point out a better way of planting to avoid the damage done in the interface areas last summer.

Water conservation is being singled out as a focus for the Kelowna Club. The club has introduced an Eight-point Action Plan to promote a radical change in thinking regarding the water supply in the Okanagan Valley. It sets out to make conservation of water an integral part of the planning process.

The Vernon Club is also backing this water conservation plan. The club is also closely monitoring its well-known heronry. When it started in 1986, there were four nests. As the heronry grew so did the city. Commercial buildings, including a Walmart, now surround it. Surprisingly, the heronry was up to 50 pairs last year. The club has planted a grove of cottonwoods near Swan Lake in the event that the heron will have to relocate sometime in the future.

Vermillion Forks Field Naturalists are busy trying to prevent drilling for methane gas in the coalfields near Princeton. The concern is the contamination of the ground water. The club is also looking at approaching Nature Trust or The Land Conservancy to offer some protection to Swan Lake. They have worked very hard to enhance this area by planting, weeding and building a bird blind and would now like to keep out things like ATV's.

The Oliver-Osoyoos Club are involved with The Land Conservancy in acquiring an 80 acre piece of land on Anarchist Mountain that has old growth timber on it. Members of the club continue to volunteer their time at the Osoyoos Desert Centre. An Environment Committee has been formed to keep local government aware of sensitive environmental concerns.

The Shuswap Club is now going through a 45 page Habitat Management Plan for the Salmon Arm Bay and is finding areas of concern that may require their immediate input. The club has also finished its 5 poster series on the birds of the Salmon Arm Marsh and is distributing them to schools and visiting classrooms, teaching the students about the value of the marshland.

Our newest member in our region is the Lillooet Naturalist Society and it is showing a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. The club has helped in constructing spawning channels on the Lower Seton River, which will enhance the fish habitat and will also help the bird population. Bat houses, enough to accommodate over a thousand bats, were set up on the Old Fraser Bridge, and to makes things even better there was a confirmed sighting (photo) of the Silver-haired Bat. They also have an active Young Naturalist Club. The youngsters were interviewed on the local radio to provide publicity.

NORTHERN REGION COORDINATOR'S Report

By Sandra Kinsey, Prince George, BC

The North region of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) includes seven federated clubs and one affiliated club. As of the spring of 2004, we will have a new affiliated club in our region. The area covers all of British Columbia north of Cache

Creek.

In 2003 we held no conference calls. I was able to attend, in person, at least one meeting of the Mackenzie Nature Observatory, Timberline Trail and Nature Club, and the Prince George Naturalists Club.

The clubs continue to chug along. Field trips, monthly programmes, land use planning processes, work bees, presentations, dealing with requests from various groups/government, and special events keep the clubs busy. Some members are able to attend workshops to increase their knowledge and to work at keeping nature worth knowing. These workshops and seminars also keep the lines of communication open between naturalists, industry, governments, and agencies.

Memberships are generally stable. Some of the clubs produced regular newsletters to keep their members better informed.

Skeena Valley Naturalists are still active. Our smallest club, they have held a meeting, done a Christmas Bird Count, hosted an Open House, and mailed Notes to members.

Williams Lake Field Naturalists continues to operate their very success Scout Island Nature Centre. In fact, they were able to expand their programs in 2003. Visitors came from around the world. Also very successful is the Mackenzie Nature Observatory's Mugaha bird migration monitoring station. Both initiatives involve fund-raising, hiring staff, land management, staving off encroachments by proposed developments, hosting school trips, and much more.

Kootenay Region Report

By Brenda Balaam

The arrival of Boundary Naturalists' Ron Walker (Christina Lake) at the Kimberley FBCN Fall General Meeting with its Mildred-White-Celebration theme inaugurated the Kootenays and B.C. to a very promising 2003-2004!

The Kimberley Ski Lodge setting; early morning binding led by Gary Davidson (Nakusp) to historic Wycliffe and Reed Lake; President Jeremy McCall's fine-tuned Agenda with its eye-opener when Past-President Anne Murray came to his rescue as a volunteer Minute Secretary 2003-2004!

The Great Blue Heron Power Point Research Report by Marlene Machmer, Nelson, initiated by West Kootenay Naturalists' president, Ed Beynon. Vibrant Rocky Mountain Naturalists demonstrated their amazing innovativeness for an excellently programmed weekend, including Jasper, Alberta author/Guest Speaker Ben Gadd: Raven's End (2001) and Handbook of the Canadian Rockies (1995) the presentation of the 2003 Regional Award to the Kootenay's own Gary Davidson; the inspired Mildred-White theme fully completed with the dedication of Mildred's Pond/wetlands north of Kimberley. Enroute home, delegates could tune into Beginners Guide to BC Birdsong by John Neville (Saltspring) and Mel Coulson (Smithers) introduced at Kimberley or Songs and Sounds of the Canadian Rockies (Neville); Raven chit-chat on the mountain beside Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital (Trail) receives new under

The 2005 awarding of the Queen's Jubilee Medal (VNHS/WKNA) to Bill Merilees for establishing the FBCN in the Kootenays(1972) sharpens our insight. FBCN commitments are not easy in small clubs: The Arrow Lakes

Naturalists, the Club of Gary Davidson and Nancy Anderson, ceased to function last year (10 members). Until 2005, Gary, on teacher exchange, will be in Hobart, Tasmania, The Kaslo Affiliate Group led by overworked Rev. Dirk Rinehart survives socially outside the FBCN. I have also touched bases with a Creston townsite group who glance in our direction. During 2003, I made four rewarding visits to meetings in Nelson, but they have chosen for now to rejoin the West Kootenay Naturalists. A Nelson March meeting indicated several are showing symptoms of burnout. At the Castlegar February meeting for Marlene Machmer's Great Blue Heron summation, they indicated the desire to become active again. Their leader, John Carter, for whom they named a star and a mountain, was wiped out in an avalanche before Michel Trudeau; horrendous loss of a great leader! Hopefully, we can breathe new life and vision "on eagles wings" into the Kootenays!

Boundary Naturalists, despite the loss of Director Ruth Kuhl, have wings with president and new Director, Rob Chorlenki: Grasslands, scientific Trout/fish study (Kettle River) during opposition to a U.S./Boundary damsite; Rob attended the Victoria, Kamloops, and the Vancouver FBCN (May 2004) AGMs! Rocky Mountain Naturalists' new Director is Tara Skzrupa, replacing Ian Adams who produced their FGM Thank you Cards including the camera-perfect Silky Phacelia wildflower and the FBCN/Wildlife Watch brochure: Wildlife Viewing in the Kootenay Region; RMN memberships increased in 2004! A new baby and jobwatch challenges for Ian, an RMN promoter.

The West Kootenay Naturalists via Director and president are locked into BC Parks Day (July 17) and raising \$30,000 Interpretive funds all for Kokanee Park, Nelson; Joan Snyder continues with Caribou Recovery; the club is involved with Sturgeon Recovery, Bat research, new Skink research; the Lelliots attend the Western Bluebird Conferences, providing WKNA leadership reminiscent of the awesome RMNA involvements over the years; Boundary has an enviable Bluebird history, too! Science Fairs surfaced once more in the WKNA/BN. WKNA Web Webster has for some years been the Representative on the Columbia River Water Use Consultative Committee. Young Naturalist groups based in Nelson and Trail are activating themselves. Dr. Vince Loyola discovered a river otter under watchful eyes of a bald eagle the day I trekked with them in Beaver Park and elsewhere. Rivers Day plans are in place. A Columbia River Report (BC Hydro) invitation comes yearly which we always attend.

Many thanks FBCN Office for (1) protest letter to Arrow Lakes News to save very endangered Caribou and habitat. See BC Naturalist pp 18-19/26 (Winter) by Dr. Joan Snyder. (2) Protesting BC Government about proposed giant Jumbo Glacier Ski Resort beside Purcell Wilderness Conservancy and critical ecological areas. (3) publicizing Castlegar's Blue Heron/Wildlife Trust: Waldie Island, WKNA efforts. May 2003 ceremony.

A December Kootenay FBCN meeting for Directors/Presidents (Trail) was avalanched out; teleconference February 2 very productive; new RMN Director away until mid-May; Regional meeting for everyone May 28-30 hosted by WKNA. Boundary and West Kootenay Naturalists have attended AGMs and FGMs in amazing numbers most often at their own expense! It makes a big difference compared with past years! Kootenay clubs have eyeballed their newsletters, noting Nelson's effective efforts; scholarships/bursaries; membership and "too few doing all the work" are now intensely in focus! Never more important in this Environmental Era is the FBCN Motto: "TO KNOW NATURE AND KEEP IT WORTH KNOWING"! Ron Walker, Boundary Naturalists, Mildred-White fan, has been with the FBCN Kootenays since earliest beginnings; need some of his wisdom right now! Lucky Boundary Young Naturalists to have Ron Walker nearby!

Lower Mainland Region Report

By George Bangham

The lower mainland region is at 14 clubs now after the Lillooet Naturalists moved to the somewhat more appropriate Thompson-Okanagan region and the Stoney Creek Environmental Committee are now an Associate group.

After not hearing much from the Bowen Nature Club for a long while, we finally made contact and they heartily offered to host our recent March regional meeting. Their main conservation issue is to try to save a large tract of land at Cape Roger Curtis which is under threat of development. Sue-Ellen Fast gave us an over-view of the issue and along with other locals, took us on a 2 hour walk to the area. The club is also working with Village planners to avoid conflict with the heronry during nesting in Snug Cove. Thanks to DG Blair-Whitehead, President Billie Gowans and other club members for so generously hosting the regional meeting.

The Alouette Field Naturalists have taken their concerns regarding the park proposal for Blue Mountain to the neighbouring municipality of Mission by way of a power point presentation to the Council. Although the Council was not aware of the issue in the beginning, the end result was a joint meeting of both Maple Ridge and Mission Councils and hopefully they will join together to have the area saved as a park. Mission is designating part of their community tree farm as a park and this would make a nice tie-in with Blue Mountain.

A plaque commemorating Adeline Nicol has been installed by the Alouette Field Naturalists along with a dogwood tree in Tynehead Park. Adeline was the FBCN office manager in the late 1970's and lived on a farm which is now Tynehead Park. The purchase of Codd Island Wetlands is in the final stages of completion. It appears that private funding along with yet more funds from The Lands Conservancy will satisfy the last \$200,000 required.

The Burke Mountain Naturalists continue to be a busy group, with many presentations and field trips and led by their latest President and long-time conservation champion, Elaine Golds. The main issues for them continue to be; the future of the Riverview hospital site, working with GVRD on the management of Colony Farm (mowing during nesting season) and monitoring the dykes and adjacent farms along DeBoville Slough. Thanks to Larry Cowan (also VNHS) who leads a number of trips for various groups to DeBoville, Colony Farm and Minnehada park. The club has produced a new bird song CD. They printed 1000 copies and have sold 900 already, each CD is \$15 and available to others.

Presentations were made to the GVRD Communities Committee from Burke Mtn and Langley Field Naturalists clubs, along with many others, to prevent the removal of 1100 acres from the Agricultural Land Reserve on Barnston Island (Fraser river). Some land owners wanted to rezone as industrial use for the increased monetary value. This would have placed the GVRD's Liveable Region Plan and Green Zone Strategy in jeopardy. Fortunately, the proposal was voted down, for now, by the GVRD.

The Chilliwack Field Naturalists have been active in several directions. They have participated in Rivers Day at their local Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve, mounted a display at the Mission Bald Eagle Festival and organized field trips to Burns Bog, the Cheam Wetlands regional park and to Seabird Island for winter birding. Several members are involved in on-going projects. Denis Knopp continues to sit on the Recovery Team for Tall Bugbane and the Pacific Giant Salamander, as well as leading efforts to maintain

and enhance the Kournosoff Nature Reserve. Bob Thomas sits as a member of the Cultus Lake Sockeye Recovery team and, along with Ted Burns and David Hutchings, is working to implement a *Living by Water* project at Cultus Lake.

Concerned citizens have lost the first battle to stop the logging of the pristine Elk Creek area and now a multi-million dollar resort development is proposed for the Bridal Falls-Mt. Cheam-Elk Creek area, home to a number of red and blue-listed species.

The Central Valley Naturalists have provided input to the Abbotsford Parks & Recreation and Sumas Mountain Regional Park Master Plans, and written letters expressing their views on the City of Abbotsford's sustainability charter, Barnston Island ALR proposal, Elk Creek logging, Chilcotin Park, streamside protection regulations and forestry stewardship. They have given two cash prizes to students with projects promoting our goals of knowing nature at the Fraser Valley Regional Science Fair in March. Hard work by Abbotsford residents (including several CV Naturalists), government officials, lawyers and First Nations has been rewarded with the decision of the National Energy Board to deny the application for a powerline to support the proposed SE2 power plant.

The Langley Field Naturalists along with Wild Bird Trust have an agreement with the Ministry of Water, land and Air Protection to jointly begin a program of bird banding in the Forslund Watson Property beginning this March under the guidance of Derek Mathews, a registered Master Bander. The intention will be to forward the data to the Canadian Migration monitoring Network. In a rapidly growing municipality such as Langley, this information will highlight the significance of remnant forest patches in an urban/rural landscape.

After many years of leading the Delta Naturalists Society, Fred Bender, their 90 years plus President has relinquished the task to Terry McComas. Terry will also take over as Director to the FBCN allowing John Whittaker to take a long deserved break. Both Fred and John have served their club exceptionally well and we thank them for a job well done.

The club has recently formed a committee (chaired by Fred!) that will work towards environmental improvement by getting its hands dirty. They are committed to taking part in an ocean-shore clean-up and are considering other projects, such as mapping the indigenous and invasive flora in Boundary Bay Regional Park and helping with the cleanup of invading *Spartina anglica* in Boundary Bay.

The White Rock & Surrey Naturalists also have a new President and Director to the FBCN. Anne Savenye will take the torch from Chuck Belotte who stepped up when he was needed and Viveka Ohman will carry on for John Verhuel .

The Birds on the Bay program organized by the Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society with partners including WR&S Naturalists is focused on raising public awareness and knowledge of Boundary Bay's international designation as an Important Bird Area. This is an amazing, well organized program of events with presentations and field trips almost

every weekend from Jan 24th to May 29th. This is a fine example of what can be accomplished by the hard work of volunteer naturalists.

The Vancouver Natural History Society continues to have a strong conservation section chaired by Katherine Steig and are following up on several issues.

Roberts Bank Container Port expansion will be a huge project and is being reviewed by Federal and BC Environmental Assessment Offices. A good presentation was given by Darrell Dejardin, senior environmental specialist of the Vancouver Port Authority. Options are being reviewed to minimize damage to eel grass beds. June Ryder is monitoring the process.

Eburne Lands, a large reclaimed mill site on the Fraser River at the foot of Granville St and across from the airport is undergoing discussions on the best use by N Fraser Port Authority (Feds), Translink, Van City and a coordinated group of citizens. Translink wants to use it as a bus parking lot. We want a park and public walkway to eventually connect to other walkways along the river. The citizens group is asking Van Planning to be more creative at this Gateway

After years of negotiation and advocacy, it appears that Burns Bog will finally be protected! Thanks to the offer made from four levels of government and all who sent letters and e-mails.

The VNHS summer camp will be at McGillivray Pass this year from July 25 to August 1. The pass itself marks the mid-point of the historic 1930's mining and telegraph trail between Anderson Lake and Bralorne. Others are welcome with a membership to the VNHS.

The lower mainland WiTS pilot program will not proceed as planned due to general lack of interest based on low returns of nest site data. We have realized that others (CWS) are monitoring bald eagles in our area and they are far from being threatened. In fact in some areas the eagles are a threat to the Great Blue Heron nesting sites. We have arranged for those few individuals who want to carry on, to work with others for data entry into the Community Mapping Network

Office Report

By Maria Hamann, FBCN Office Manager

The work at the FBCN office normally has marked circles, the beginning months of the year are specially focused on the YEAR END data collection and the Club Fees, by Spring we are preparing for the AGM and then by summer, we used to have a little bit of rest but not any more. Last year we organized the successful ER Gathering and this year we will be keeping track of the working hours and payroll of 5 summer students that will be working in nature interpretation in different Provincial Parks. After summer we begin to work on the President's Appeal and to prepare for the Fall General meeting, plus the

continuous bookkeeping, banking and other financial chores. After the communication coordinator position was suspended I have assumed (with grace!) some of his regular responsibilities such as gathering the Club Chats for the BC Naturalist and the reports for this Annual Report.

In conclusion, not too much time remains for “hanging around”!

Last year, I attend two fantastic and learning FBCN meetings, the AGM in Kamloops and the FGM in Kimberley. I also enjoyed a second “treat” visiting Kamloops for the ER Gathering meeting.

Kamloops showed me its beautiful grasslands when driving along the Nicola Valley in company of Bev Ramey and Dr. Brink with his wonderful teachings along the way. We heard the musical song of the meadowlarks and at the unforgettable “ILAHEE” (Dr Brink’s cabin) the deep and kind of sad call of the loons. Along with the beauty of the grasslands we also witnessed the destruction made by the big summer fires.

By the fall one of my dreams came true visiting the Kootenays! To see and feel the Rocky Mountains in the crispy days of fall in Kimberley, was almost like a subliminal experience. We also attended the dedication of the pond to Mildred White at the Wild-Rose Ranch located close to Wasa Lake .A memorable scenic conclusion to that trip was driving through the Rocky Mountain Trench and The Columbia Wetlands on our way back to Vancouver with Jeremy McCall and George Bangham.

A final thought is, the sad passing of some of our members, Kay Beamish, Ruth Kuhl, Jack Sarles, Helen Lamb, Eva Jacobs, Joan King, Rosemary Kimmel and most recently Melda Buchanan , to mention some. This brought me sorrow and sadness but at the same time filled my soul with inspiration and sense of duty learning about all the wonderful things accomplished by them and their valuable contribution to the conservation of Nature and to their community. What inspiring lives lived by these members!

Project Reports

Living by Water Project Report, 2003

By Sarah Kipp & Clive Callaway

April 2004

In 2003 the Living by Water team focussed on working with community groups and municipalities throughout the province, to help raise awareness about the importance of shorelines and to help groups working in their local areas on shoreline stewardship. Over the year we participated in 62 BC events, mostly giving workshops and presentations, but also providing the Living by Water display for events like Fisheries Awareness days. Sarah Kipp and Clive Callaway were on the province wide CBC open line radio show Almanac in July, discussing the importance of healthy shorelines and answering listeners’ questions.

As well as working with community groups, the team has started working with municipalities, realtors, and land professionals such as planners. A “Realtors’ Shoreline

Awareness Program” has proven successful, with over 600 realtors to date attending a 2 to 3 hour presentation.

The project team thanks Living by Water Project funders. In 2003 these included the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Vancouver Foundation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada through the Georgia Basin Action Plan, Columbia Basin Trust (through the Columbia Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership), and several local chapters of Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Many communities and local groups have assisted with inkind support, including billets, meals, meeting organizing and promotion, equipment, and media promotion. As well, many community groups throughout the province are helping to sell *On the Living Edge* to shoreline residents in their communities. They also continue to use Living by Water brochures and other materials in their educational programs. The tremendous support provided in communities makes the job of shoreline stewardship outreach much easier.

Nationally, the project is moving forward. During 2003 Sarah and Clive offered the national management of the project to Canadian Nature Federation, with the agreement of the other partners. CNF took over during the summer of 2003 and is administering the national grant from the McConnell Family Foundation. A National Steering Committee, with Anne Murray representing BC, meets periodically by phone or in person to guide CNF. Sarah and Clive continue to help project coordinators in Edmonton, Regina and Ottawa move the project forward in these areas. The Alberta edition of *On the Living Edge* was published in late 2002; during 2003 the Saskatchewan / Manitoba and Ontario editions were published.

FBCN has played a critical role in helping Living by Water develop, and in guiding it from a BC project to a national one. The project co-founders would like to take this opportunity to thank all Federation members for their support of the project. They look forward to working with local clubs on shoreline stewardship outreach in their communities, especially on themes such as Species at Risk, biodiversity, and the role that healthy shorelines play.

Wildlife Tree Stewardship (WiTS) Program

By Kerri-Lynne Wilson, Program Coordinator

The goal of WiTS is to create, coordinate, and assist a network of community stewards committed to conserving coastal wildlife tree habitats through volunteer monitoring, landowner agreements, and community education along the Strait of Georgia.

The WiTS program was very successful in 2003. With the end of 2 year period of EcoAction funding on July 31, 2003 we were excited about our successful application to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, which provided a period of significant funding. During this time, the program progressed in many avenues.

Volunteers

We are very fortunate in having a committed group of volunteer coordinators. These people organize and assist wildlife nest tree stewards in their area. These volunteer coordinators are irreplaceable due to their local knowledge and commitment to wildlife nest trees. They provide information to WiTS on undocumented nest trees and/or nest trees that are threatened.

We have expanded in both number of volunteers and areas monitored. Monitoring is now occurring on Mayne, Saturna, and Pender Island as well as Tofino and Ucluelet. In addition, we have included a number of Young Naturalists and their families in the Lantzville, Nanaimo and Ladysmith area. This expansion was the result of presentations provided by WiTS.

In Campbell River, we held a workshop for wildlife tree monitors and those community members interested in the program. This workshop included a very interesting presentation by David Hancock, author of “The Bald Eagle of Alaska, B.C. and Washington”. Mr. Hancock has devoted his life to studying West Coast and arctic wildlife.

A similar workshop was held in Sooke. Michael Miller was the keynote speaker and provided information on his work with Osprey and spoke about key identification features of juvenile, young and adult osprey, bald eagles, and golden eagles. Sooke is an area where we would like to increase the number of monitors as well as document more information on wildlife nest trees.

Landowner Contact

We hired a landowner contact specialist, Ian Bruce, to work on educating landowners on wildlife tree habitat protection. Ian met with our volunteer co-ordinators to develop a landowner contact system. This system ranks the priority of landowner contact in a given area based on the accessibility of the landowners and the risk assessment of the tree. With this system in place, Ian focused on Victoria as a trial area. The result is that landowners have been educated on wildlife tree conservation, and several have expressed interest in signing stewardship agreements.

Government

We initiated a meeting with Qualicum Beach MLA Gillian Trumper regarding enhanced provincial protection for wildlife trees. Representatives were also present from Canadian Wildlife Service, and the Regional District of Nanaimo.

We provided a presentation to the staff of the Vancouver Island region, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP) Ecosystems Section meeting on our project and Atlas.

We hosted a meeting in Nanaimo with our volunteer monitor co-ordinators and local governments. 10 local government representatives attended.

We are providing information on wildlife nest trees to those local governments who have entered into a written agreement, with either WiTS or MWLAP, for information sharing. These local governments are either working towards protection, or have instituted protective measures, of buffer areas around bald eagle nest trees or heron nest trees, usually in the form of Development Permit Areas. To date, information sharing agreements have been completed with Islands Trust, District of Campbell River, the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona, the Regional District of Nanaimo, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the District of Saanich, and the District of Central Saanich. .

Other

We are a member of the Urban Forestry Stewardship, an organization established to promote ecosystem-based urban forest planning at the regional level within the Greater Victoria area. The Habitat Acquisition Trust, with funding support from the Georgia Basin Action Plan and the District of Saanich, administers the Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative.

We participated at an annual workshop hosted by the Department of National Defence Environmental Science Advisory Committee (ESAC). Presentations were given on the results of our monitoring of Bald Eagles and Osprey on Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt and Bald Eagles at Canadian Forces Maritime Experimental and Test Ranges. This workshop was well attended by naturalists, scientists, educators, and all levels of government and provided further exposure of the WiTS program. Each year, ESAC compiles the project reports and places them in an annual report for distribution.

If you are interested in the WiTS program, please feel free to contact me at (250) 746-3803 or kerri-lynn.wilson@bchydro.bc.ca.

The Seabird Survival Program

by Bruce Whittington

In Active Pass and Porlier Pass, at either end of Galiano Island, thousands of migrating Bonaparte's Gulls have been stopping to rest and feed before continuing their northward flights. Pacific Loons and Brandt's Cormorants are gathering too, before they begin their breeding seasons.

In Sidney Channel, Rhinoceros Auklets are courting, swimming side by side with bills tipped up. In the coming months, large numbers will spend long days in these waters, catching fish, which they will take to their nestlings in their burrows, after night has fallen.

On Snake Island, near Nanaimo, and the Chain Islets, off Oak Bay, cormorants and Glaucous-winged Gulls are establishing territories, and gathering nesting material.

These five areas support large congregations of seabirds. Their significance has been recognized in their designation as Important Bird Areas, under the IBA program worldwide.

FBCN is the IBA partner in British Columbia, working closely with the Canadian partners, the Canadian Nature Federation, and Bird Studies Canada. Your Federation has been working on a project to offer greater protection to the seabirds that depend on these IBAs, called the Seabird Survival Program.

In the initial phase, Barry Booth developed management plans for the five IBAs in the southern Strait of Georgia. These plans also called for a public outreach program to foster a better understanding of the needs of seabirds, and the challenges they face.

As part of this outreach, FBCN has developed a public information brochure called *The Seabird Survival Program: How You Can Make a Difference*. The full colour brochure is directed at recreational and commercial boaters, encouraging them to take voluntary action to minimize human disturbance of seabirds where they congregate to feed, rest, or breed.

The brochures have been offered to various boating organizations, including yacht clubs and Power Squadrons, throughout the south coast. An illustrated slide talk to introduce the program was also offered. Perhaps due in part to the short time frame of the project, many organizations did not have program time available for the presentation, but a small number was done. Response has been very positive about the brochure however, and these are being distributed as requests come in. As availability permits, the brochures will also be distributed to marinas and other marine outlets.

FBCN is also very pleased with the support of *Pacific Yachting* magazine, which agreed to publish an article about the program in its May issue. This will reach an estimated 50,000 boaters in B.C. A similar article is scheduled to appear in *WaveLength* magazine for kayakers.

Naturalist clubs that would like to offer copies of the brochure to their members can contact the FBCN office.

FBCN thanks the Vancouver Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, and the Community Action Fund of the Canadian Nature Federation, without whose support the project would not have been possible.

Representatives Reports

Agriculture Wildlife Advisory Committee

- *Joan Best, Alvin Kimmel, Bev Ramey*

This committee is co-chaired by staff of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, with representatives from Ducks Unlimited, Canadian Wildlife Service, BC Agriculture Council, BC Cattlemen's Association, BC Wildlife Federation and FBCN. The Committee serves an advisory role to the Partnership Committee of Deputy and Assistant Deputy Ministers of government, and it provides input on agriculture/wildlife pilot compensation programs. The committee met three times this past year (Cranbrook, Kamloops, Abbotsford, with the next meeting scheduled for Penticton).

The pilot Wildlife Compensation Initiative projects have been allocated \$3 million in federal government money (from January 2004 through to March 2006) for compensation (ie. losses of crops or stock to wildlife) and prevention/mitigation (ie. building fencing to keep elk out). After March 2006, the provincial government will be expected to contribute 40% of the funding. In the past year, funds have been spent on the Delta waterfowl losses, East Kootenay ungulate losses, wild predator losses, with additional funds for expanded or new initiatives. In the Okanagan, deer fencing and bird trapping of starlings is underway; also construction of snake fencing to provide corridors for movement of snakes while directing them out of vineyards. The elk population in the Kootenays is estimated at 23,000 with about 8,000 elk considered resident (or homesteader). Special hunting permits are being issued to reduce the population of elk.

The next meeting will include a discussion on the proposed national park in the South Okanagan, since the BC Cattlemen's Association has expressed some

Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture-CIJV

Wayne C. Weber, FBCN representative on the CIJV board

The Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV), founded in 2002, is an initiative under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), aimed at conserving habitat for migratory birds in the southern and central interior of B.C., and also in a narrow strip of western Alberta. It is similar in function to other Joint Ventures under NABCI. The Pacific Coast Joint Venture, an international Joint Venture between Canada and the U.S., has been in operation for about 10 years, and is focussed in B.C. mainly on waterfowl habitat in the Fraser and Comox estuaries. There is also a Prairie Joint Venture, covering the Prairie Provinces, and an Eastern Joint Venture, covering Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. Establishment of the CIJV fills a major geographic gap in southern Canada.

The CIJV, unlike most of the other Joint Ventures, is not focussed entirely on wetland habitats, but also includes measures to conserve upland habitats important to migratory birds.

In many ways, the work which the CIJV plans to do is complementary to the wetland habitat work done for many years in B.C. by Ducks Unlimited Canada. The

proposed activities include both land acquisition and stewardship/conservation measures on privately owned land. Funding for the CIJV comes from a number of sources, but a key portion comes from funds appropriated annually by the U.S. Congress for habitat acquisition in Canada.

The CIJV includes both a Technical Committee, which reviews information and makes proposals for projects, and a Board, which prioritizes and approves projects, and is responsible for overall administration of the Joint Venture. The FBCN is represented on the Board, but not on the smaller Technical Committee. The Board is chaired by Environment Canada, and includes representatives from the Province of B.C., Ducks Unlimited Canada, and a broad range of non-government organizations with conservation interests and land management activities in the B.C. Interior. A key goal is to avoid overlap in bird-related land acquisition/stewardship activities of the various organization, and to ensure good communication and coordinated planning.

The official “launch” of the CIJV, attended by more than 60 persons including the media, was held in Kamloops on November 28, 2003, and a news release was issued. The Board has held 6 meetings so far, and its next meeting will be on June 16-17, 2004 at Cranbrook.

The CIJV is an important habitat conservation/stewardship initiative which will probably be in existence for decades and will result in the expenditure of several million dollars per year. It is of paramount importance to birds in B.C., and is a program which deserves the full and enthusiastic support of the FBCN.

For further information on the CIJV, contact the Coordinator, Saul Schneider of Environment Canada, at (604) 666-2342, or by email at saul.schneider@ec.gc.ca .

Coalition for the Licensing and Registration of ORVs

By Joan Best

The Coalition continues to work on fine-tuning the rationale portion of the document intended for presentation to government. Once the rationale for effective management of off-road vehicle licensing and registration has been completed, the Coalition will expand the document to include the pros and cons of various options for administration/legislation. The Coalition believes that licensing and registration is the cornerstone of successful management. Education, safety, stewardship, conservation, enhancement and enforcement are also key elements.

When the Coalition was established it was hoped that government would have been provided with the document some time ago. However, the complexity of the undertaking combined with lack of funds has created unforeseen delays. The latest timeline for putting the finished document in the hands of government is now tentatively set for late Fall of this year. Expected to be of much assistance in the process is the government’s Inter Agency Policy Group. This Group will assist in ensuring that the final document presented to government will be acceptable to all concerned.

The Canadian Nature Federation has launched an initiative to work on a Canada-wide programme focussed on communicating initiatives between provinces and also approaching representatives of off-road vehicles with respect to their advertising. Bev Ramey and I, FBCN representatives on the Coalition, have stressed that the motorized recreation sector must be invited to be equal partners.

The Coalition is working hard to keep this important process going, despite the difficulties, most notably the lack of funds. The document is being worked on in stages as funds are available. However, one advantage of the incremental process is that each phase is thoroughly reviewed before commencing the next, resulting in a final document that will have been accepted through consensus. The Coalition continues to grow and build support as it goes and now numbers amongst its supporters, the following organizations:

- Quad Riders Association of BC (ATV/BC)
- Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, B.C.
- Ministry of Forests
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
- Ministry of Water, land and Air Protection
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Federation of B.C. Naturalists
- B.C. Cattlemen's Association
- Greater Kamloops Motorcycle Association
- Outdoor Recreation Council
- Trails B.C.
- Kelowna Dirt Bike Club
- B.C. Wildlife Federation
- Pacific NorthWest Motorcycle Association

Environment Found Of BC

By Jeremy McCall

Definite progress in 2003!

The Environmental Fund of BC (EFBC) was formed as a registered charity in 1995 to solicit workplace contributions for the core operating expenses of environmental organizations. It was modelled on Earthshare in Washington State and the Environmental Federation of Oregon. In addition to the FBCN, the present members are Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, BC Environmental Network, CPAWS, Evergreen Foundation, Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society, Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, Sierra Club of BC, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation and West Coast Environmental Law. Each of these members appoints a director.

For the year ended June 30, 2002, EFBC received workplace contributions of \$24,700 which amounted to 58 cents for each dollar of dues paid by its members and grants received. For the year ended June 30, 2003, workplace contributions declined to

\$19,575, but grants received were reduced from \$28,500 to \$7,000, so that contributions amounted to 93 cents for every dollar of grants and dues. For EFBC's current fiscal year workplace contributions of \$32,000 are forecast. No grants were received and these contributions will amount to \$2.33 for every dollar of members' dues. There is a high level of confidence in the forecast contributions because they were committed in last Fall's annual campaign. This is real progress! After some years of results which have been quite frustrating for its members the efforts of EFBC's campaign staff are beginning to bear fruit.

The annual Fall campaigns at Duke Energy and Creo Products have produced some excellent results. These campaigns run parallel with that of the United Way. The EFBC has also done much of the necessary groundwork for establishing a Fall campaign presence at a number of other firms and organizations such as Mountain Equipment Coop and the District of West Vancouver.

Participation in the EFBC's campaign gives each member group an excellent opportunity to reach out to employees in a wide variety of organizations and tell them what they do. In the case of the FBCN it provides us with an opportunity to get out our messages about the value of nature, the benefits of membership in our clubs and the continuing need for conservation. The method used is a brief lunchtime show-and-tell called *Lunching on the Wild Side*, in which representatives of the member group features a presentation about its organization's work. When a member organization makes an effective presentation, it boosts its share of donations because donors may direct their donations to that organization.

I have come around to realizing that there is enormous potential for this organization, not only for raising funds for core operations, which are always in demand, but also for reaching out to quite a different public with some of our more urgent messages about conservation and protected areas at a critical time in this province. All that is needed to do that is to get a few more of our members involved in the lunchtime meetings. For FBCN members who enjoy reaching out to the public this presents a unique opportunity.

Fraser River Coalition Activities Report

By Dr Bert Brink

1. The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy released their report on the debate over environmental indicator and natural capital.

The environmental indicators are designed to complement national economic indicators such as the G.N.P. (Gross National Product).

The Coalition has expressed concern over (a) the lack of press coverage; (b) rapport with regional indicators of regional health; and (c) funding.

2. Lower Fraser River Issues: the Fraser Basin Council could not be persuaded to examine issues relating to the Marpole Basin / Eburne site and the efforts of the Port North Fraser to:
 - (a) ignore park and walkway policy of the City of Vancouver, and to
 - (b) intrude a massive container facility in a residential area and ignore safety concerns, and
 - (c) to bypass, on federally owned land, the Canada Environmental Review Process. Wendy Turner spearheaded Coalition report with considerable success.
3. Coalition supports the Greater Vancouver Regional District Parks to secure land and dyke on the Pitt River Lowlands and lends support to the Fraser River Estuary Management Program (F.R.E.M.P.) to review the Pitt River reaches
4. When F.R.E.M.P "stepped out" of their educational role to tell the public about important geophysical biological socio-economic features of the great River, the Coalition tried to fill the gap with information signs and the development of pamphlets. F.B.C.N. and V.N.H.S. helped funding but funding deficiencies remain. The features are educational and not controversial.
5. Coalition has repeatedly expressed concern over the lack of coordination of the 3 Fraser Port Authorities over:
 - (a) container port developments and Canada's gateway to Asia Pacific
 - (b) dredging
 - (c) sewage and storm water management and pollution
 - (d) inadequacy of mandates (the Fraser River above Kanaka Creek is ignored waste disposal, gravel removal, dykes, etc.)
6. F.R.E.M.P and Fraser River Coordination and responsibilities are mixed and confusing.
7. Coalition supports the Fraser River Action plan should be revisited, revitalized and its recommendations implemented.

Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia

By Alfred Bawtree

The past year has been another active one for the Grassland Conservation Council (GCC). The annual meeting and tour was held at Big Bar Ranch in the South Cariboo on June 19-22, 2003. A new strategic plan for 2003-2008 was approved. The GCC programme is now divided into three areas:

1. Education and outreach
2. Grassland Stewardship and sustainable ranching
3. Conservation of grassland ecosystems

The GCC has taken the lead in the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off Road Vehicles. In the March 2004 issue of the BC Grasslands it was stated “ Over the next few months the Coalition will be developing and presenting a draft strategy to government that details options for implementing a management strategy for ORVs including licensing and registration.” Hopefully some progress is being made!

Revenue for 2003 was reported as \$360,540 which is double the figure for 2002
As of March 31, 2003 membership in the GCC stood at 142 which included 11 corporate members.

The annual meeting was followed by a tour to the Churn Creek Protected Area where we spent a day discussing grassland soils, vegetation and wildlife. We were also treated to a report by Joyce Holmes on how she and her husband successfully carry on a cattle ranching operation within the confines of the protected area, suffered from past overgrazing by cattle but improved management is evident in on abundance of blue bunch wheat grass.

On the third day we visited grasslands on the Ok ranch after a discussion on badgers. There are approximately 190 sites in the Cariboo where badgers are on have burrowed. We visited sites where studies were taking place on the application of bio-solids to grasslands. Lawrence Joiner owner of the ranch described past and present management practices.

The GCC held a Fall meeting and tour (October 17-18) in Princeton area where we looked at a ponderosa pine-bunchgrass ecosystem on the Willis Ranch and discussed forest harvesting and fire in a Douglas fir site. Madelon Schouten and Don Burbridge from the Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists led a tour of the Swan Lake Wildlife Viewing and Habitat Restoration Project in the grasslands near Princeton.

On May 18 & 19, 2004 the GCC will sponsor a workshop in Kamloops on Mitigation Fragmentation and Development of BC Grasslands.

On June 18 & 19 they will hold their annual meeting and tour in the Merritt area.

Identified Wildlife Management Strategy

By Elaine Golds

The latest version of the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS), a component of the Forest and Range Practices Act, was essentially completed in 2003 and is anticipated to be released by the provincial government sometime in 2004. However, it has been completed now for six months, and it is not clear why Cabinet is taking so long to officially adopt the guidelines.

The FBCN was one of several stakeholder groups represented on an advisory committee which provided limited input into the species accounts and measures to protect habitat under this Strategy. The IWMS provides management guidelines for a total of 85 species, subspecies, populations, plants and plant communities and will cover the red- and blue-listed COSEWIC species in BC affected by forest and range management practices and found on provincial crown lands other than Parks.

It was assumed that species at risk found only in provincial Parks were protected by virtue of being located in a Park. Given that the Park Act was subsequently modified to allow resort development, etc., this may no longer be true. As was the case with Volume 1 of the IWMS, protection of IWMS-listed species will be also limited by a 1% cap on impacts on the timber supply. This cap will be applied by forest region. In some areas such as the Queen Charlotte Islands, this cap is now close to being reached. Regardless of the level of protection which will be eventually provided by the IWMS (and this remains to be seen), the species accounts will be a source of useful information.

Mc Gregor Model Forest Association
by Sandra Kinsey, Prince George, BC

Some background on the McGregor Model Forest (MMFA). It's a partnership driven non-profit organization, and part of the Canadian Model Forest Network which, in turn, is an initiative of the Canadian Forest Service. The Federation of BC Naturalists has been a partner since inception in 1992. All model forests in the network are developing ways to obtain sustainable forest management. The MMFA keeps at the leading edge.

The McGregor Model Forest Association entered Phase III in June, 2002. In this phase, more emphasis is placed on expanding partnerships and developing understandings. The four objectives are to build a legacy of ecological knowledge and management expertise; to foster the implementation of this knowledge and expertise; to enhance local understanding, participation and support of sustainable forest management; and to expand the MMFA's influence though local, provincial, national and international networks, institutions and organizations. Many new partners were added in 2003. In Phase III, the MMFA encompasses a much larger landbase as well as the communities of Prince George, Vanderhoof, Ft. St. James and Fraser Lake.

MMFA hosted an Integrated Resource Management planning conference in Nov. 12-14. I did not attend it; registration fees were too high. The MMFA were involved in a number of events in Prince George, some I could attend, some I couldn't.

As a member of the MMFA, I receive email notices of various, relevant, forestry-related events occurring locally, and across Canada. If anyone members of the FBCN are interested in receiving Model Forest emails, please contact me at sjkinsey@direct.ca. The webpage for the MMFA is <http://www.mcgregor.bc.ca>.

The Morice Land and Resource Management Plan -LRMP

By Rosemary Fox

The Morice LRMP (which is bounded by Babine Lake to the north, Tweedsmuir Park and the Nechako Reservoir to the south, the Coast Mountains to the west and the Interior Plateau to the east) concluded its work by the government's deadline of March 31 2004 for LRMP completion, and reached full consensus. The planning table was comprised of 15 sectors and two First Nations. The sectors were: Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, Fish and Fish Habitat, Forest Licensees, Guide Outfitters and Trappers, Labour, Local Government, Local Sustainability, Mining and Exploration, Motorized Recreation, Non-motorised/Wilderness Recreation, Provincial Government, Small Business, Tourism, Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. All these sectors had one representative plus alternate, one of whom sat at the Table, and a caucus to whom the representative reported. I was a member of the Conservation and Environment caucus.

The meetings, which spanned two or more days each month, took place in Houston, south of Smithers. Because of the relatively short time frame for LRMP completion (18 months), Table members were under huge pressure to complete their work in time.

Considering the amount of time required for Table members to become familiar with all the information essential to informed planning, to "gel" as a team and to become experienced in interest-based negotiation, and the overwhelming dominance of the forest industry in the area, in my view it is quite remarkable, not only that they finished on time, but also produced a quite commendable plan.

In terms of naturalists' interests, notable features of the plan are its Forest Ecosystem Management Strategy, recommendations for new parks, and management strategy for the Telkwa Caribou herd. The Forest Ecosystem Management Strategy, incorporating a biodiversity conservation strategy, is a comprehensive 12-page Appendix to the Plan.

The Strategy's goal is "to maintain forest dynamics representative of the ecological range of natural variability and the range of historic natural disturbance regimes across the forested area of the Plan at multiple scales over time". There are 12 proposed Parks and one Ecological Reserve. All except two of the parks are quite small, eight of them on Babine Lake. The two large parks are Nanika-Kidprice which includes a popular lake chain for canoeing (about 53,000 ha), and Burnie-Shea Lakes, a popular recreation destination on the east slopes of the Coast Mountains (about 34,000 ha). The Plan also contains a comprehensive strategy for restoring/conserving the Telkwa Mountains caribou herd. This strategy complements the Telkwa Caribou Recovery Plan developed for the Bulkley LRMP. Following implementation of the Bulkley Telkwa Caribou Recovery Plan, which involved translocating several caribou from the Sustut herd and restrictions on human access and recreation, the total Telkwa herd has increased from less than a dozen animals in the mid-90's to about 70 animals today. So far, therefore, this is quite a success story.

Success of the Morice LRMP will depend on its implementation. The Forest Ecosystem Management Strategy is excellent on paper, but one has to wonder how seriously it will

be taken by the forest industry licensees in the absence of effective government enforcement capability. Even if it is effectively implemented and enforced, the biological impact analysis of the Plan, conducted after completion of the final draft, predicts a continued decline in the habitat of grizzly bears, marten, goshawk, mountain goat, fisher and caribou winter range, albeit a less severe decline than would be the case without the Plan. It is discouraging that the best an LRMP can do is slow the decline of species, because of economic expansion and inevitable increase in human use of the land.

Another uncertainty of course is what changes, if any, cabinet may make to the Plan. A last minute panic occurred when a mining company based in Vancouver staked a claim in the proposed Nanika-Kidprice park, after the Table had reached consensus, creating a fear that the whole consensus package might unravel at the very last minute! To their great credit, the mining representative at the Table, and his alternate, stood firm behind the consensus agreement, putting the onus on Victoria to choose between full consensus reached by a broad range of locally resident stakeholders, and an outside mining company.

Muskwa-Kechika Wildlife Management Plan Advisory Committee

By Mark Phinney

In March 2003 FBCN submitted comments on the draft Muskwa-Kechika Wildlife Management Plan. The plan has now been substantially re-written by government staff, mainly through input by Victoria specialists. It is reportedly under review by senior officials for a higher level approval. It may go back to the Muskwa-Kechika advisory board (the high level board that oversees all things related to the Muskwa-Kechika) for final review and approval. It is not likely it will go back to the Muskwa-Kechika Wildlife Management Plan advisory committee or even to public review.

As FBCN comments last year noted, the plan definitely needed a re-write and serious overhaul by experts with a more holistic or ecological vision. Apparently one of the changes that has been made is that predator control will only be implemented to protect threatened or endangered species or populations.

Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative - Action Planning Group

By June Wood

After a void of close to two years, the Action Planning Group was called to a meeting in June 2003. Updated terms of reference are being reviewed and a draft Communications Strategy has been evaluated. Comments are being prepared on the draft Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Plan, and an article is being prepared for the summer issue of BC Naturalist. Funding has been received from the Habitat Stewardship Program and this will be used to publish a second newsletter, produce and host an interactive website and hire an expert for a workshop on the release of sturgeon caught

incidentally in nets sets by natives. A small portion of the funds will be directed to the 2004 BC Rivers Day Festival in Prince George, of which we were a part last year.

The Okanagan Shuswap Land Resource Management Plan

Harold W. King, Director & F.B.C.N. Representative

This Plan covers the Okanagan, from the U.S. Border up to and including the Shuswap. It also includes the Similkameen Valley as far north as Hedley.

Six Years in the making, it DID culminate in A Consensus in that ALL participants "SIGNED OFF".

Presently we are in a process of Implementation, whereby we are to get reports of what is being done to fulfill the PLAN.

Things seem to move slowly, but they DO move. ALL of the areas set aside to be PROTECTED AREAS, have been PROCLAIMED, but FEW if any, have been designated as PARKS.

Presently we have a small committee set up to work with the STAFF from Parks Canada, hoping to facilitate the study re the GRASSLAND PARK in the SOUTH OKANAGAN.

This TOO moves slowly, in part because Mr. Martin, our Prime Minister, decreed that there would be NO hiring, and so the Person planned to do the study cannot begin.

There seems to be a concerted effort, mainly by Fish & Game clubs, but also supported by the Cattlemen, to derail the whole idea, Mainly because they don't have faith in what will happen to their grazing Leases, if and when it becomes a Park. I should add, that the Game Clubs KNOW that there would only be HUNTING for Aboriginal Peoples.

Progress has been made in setting aside the OLD GROWTH MANAGEMENT areas, But there again we found that there was not enough OLD GROWTH in the Penticton Forest District to fulfill the PLAN. This necessitates substitution of MUCH Younger Timber, and rather negates the idea of the whole thing. You can't make trees age Forty or Fifty years overnight.

Other plans, such as the Mountain Caribou study, which was to take place over a period of Years (we don't know enough about Mountain Caribou and their Habits or Habitat) MAY be ongoing, and indeed the president of Monashee Powder Skiing DID assure me that this would be taken into consideration in their overall plan. However it SEEMS to me that The Government is in an UNSEEMLY haste to sell off any land that they can. If my perception is WRONG then I apologize.

Outdoor Recreation Council of BC

By Don Griffiths

The Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) has been involved with a number of projects this past year. Last June, ORC hosted BC Trails Day to raise the level of awareness and stewardship of trails and to conduct a trail tally on use.

BC Rivers Day was again held last September, and preparations are underway for the 25th anniversary celebration set for September 26, 2004.

ORC continues to speak up for implementation of the Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). For the Central Coast and North Coast LRMPs, ORC has conducted an economic study to determine the value of outdoor recreation to the province. Report is expected to be released in May 2004. ORC convened a workshop to provide input to government on the State of Rivers report in June 2003.

ORC is seeking grant funding to prepare phase 2 of the River Recovery project to promote health of rivers through decommissioning obsolete dams and managing others to mitigate downstream impacts. ORC also convened a meeting to discuss proliferation of independent power project proposals.

The Ministry of Forests has contracted ORC to provide an inventory of the repair needs and a qualitative assessment of risks on user maintained Forest Service trails. Finally, on the Sea-to-Sky corridor, ORC has raised concerns on the proliferation of applications for commercial tenures and is calling for a moratorium on further issuance of tenures until the completion of the LRMP.

Public Conservation Assistance Fund

By Bob Chappell

A committee of fish and wildlife staff, a representative each of the Federation of BC Naturalists and the B.C. Wildlife Federation and chaired by staff of the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund reviews all applications. For 2003, the PCAF review committee recommended, and the Minister of WLAP, approved the following 18 projects for funding, for a total of \$72,609.

635: Floating Boardwalk Improvement Project - \$5,000

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

728: Nocturnal Owl Migration Monitoring - \$1,471

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

746: HCP Habitat Restoration Follow-up - \$5,000

Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

756: Buttertubs Marsh Restoration Enhancement Project - \$3,078

Buttertubs Marsh Conservation Area Liaison Committee

759: Money's Wetland Restoration - \$2,240

Cowichan Lake Salmonid Enhancement Society

761: Goldstream Park Wildlife Viewing Project - \$3,125

Habitat Acquisition Trust

762: Wilfred Creek Complexing & Channel Enhancement - \$4,000

Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society

763: Strait of Georgia Brant Conservation Project - \$5,000

Mid-Island Wildlife Watch Society

764: Cusheon Watershed Mapping Project - \$5,000

- Island Stream & Salmon Enhancement Association
757: Burnaby Lake System Project's Nestbox Program - \$3,360
BCIT Foundation
- 758: Fraser Riparian Restoration & Clean Up - \$2,210**
Fraser River Ecological Society of Hope
- 767: Osprey Nesting Platforms for the Pitt River - \$2,850**
Oliver Busby
- 732: Grave Prairie Winter Range Enhancement - \$6,000**
The Nature Trust of BC / Sparwood & District Fish & Wildlife Association
- 737: Get Bear Smart! Kimberley - \$4,270**
East Kootenay Environmental Society - Kootenays
- 766: Community Volunteer Training for Wetland Conservation - \$10,000**
BCWF – Wetland Education Program
- 551: Becoming an Outdoor's Woman - \$4,325**
BC Wildlife Federation
- 760: Carbon Lake Clean Up - \$3,680**
Muskeg Scuba Divers
- 765: Meadowlark Festival Restoration Events - \$2,000**
Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance

The Public Conservation Assistance Fund (PCAF) has funds available to support conservation activities by Naturalist Clubs and other organizations. To assist as many groups as possible throughout the province each year, grants are modest, averaging about \$2500 each and not exceeding \$10,000. More than 250 such projects have been carried out under the programs, so far. The deadline for applications for 2004 is May 15th. The PCAF Advisory board will recommend to the Minister which project applications meet the criteria; and in their opinion should be funded. You should discuss your ideas or project with the WLAP Regional Manager for your area, before you apply; because he must send a letter of approval to the PCAF Advisory Board. For more information check out the PCAF Web-Site at <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/hctf/pubcon/index.html>

I have taken on the position of FBCN representative on the PCAF committee, which was held by Tony Embleton, for many years.

The complete details of the above list can be obtained by emailing me, Robert (Bob) Chappell at rwchappell@shaw.ca

South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program

By Dennis St. Johns

Highlights of SOSCP Activities for 2003

This has been an exciting year for SOSCP. This third year of operation has seen the program achieve results in protecting important habitats and species at risk. The purchase of two large parcels of land north of Osoyoos Lake and the Lehman Springs Ecogift Donation are two examples of the habitat securement team's efforts. The successful collaborative effort of the partners and the outreach team in SOSCP has raised the profile of environmental values and species at risk in the South Okanagan and Similkameen. The

partnership grew from 31 to 32 partners this year with the addition of the Osoyoos Lake Stewardship Society. SOSCP, with the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan, formed the SOSCP Conservation Legacy Fund, providing an opportunity for residents to contribute to a legacy that can sustain conservation in the South Okanagan Similkameen into the future. A Technical Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) was formed as a group of volunteer professionals to provide technical advice on environmental issues to the regional district board (RDOS) and planners.

SOSCP is working with the Canadian Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group on a pilot project to restore a section of the Okanagan River, considered BC's most endangered river. SOSCP also continued to coordinate with and support the formation of the Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Corridor Program (OSCCP) in Washington State. All told there were more than 50 projects underway over the past year under the SOSCP umbrella.

Wetland Stewardship Partnership

By Bev Ramey

This past year has seen about 10 meetings of the Wetland Stewardship Partnership (WSP). The name was changed in February from Wetland Working Group to better reflect the partnership between non-profits and government. WSP is chaired by Ducks Unlimited (Ian Barnett) with members from Nature Conservancy, FBCN, provincial staff (Water, Land & Air Protection and Sustainable Resource Management), federal staff (Canadian Wildlife Service and Fisheries and Oceans), and BC Hydro. Ducks Unlimited has funded the coordinator, Susanne Rautio, but as of April, Susanne has been replaced by Ted Pobran from Ministry of WLAP.

An Action Plan has been agreed on and a framework for cooperative actions. There are subcommittees on Education (chaired by BC Wildlife Federation), on Best Management Practices, and on Policy. A meeting was held in early December with Assistant and Deputy Ministers of WLAP and SRM to obtain commitment for staff support. The Chair presented a paper at the Species At Risk conference in March. Material from the Wetland Stewardship Partnership is posted on the government website at wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/wetlands/html and look under wetlands. FBCN has been asked to consider posting material on our website.

Mud Bay Park Committee: No activity to report

Naturescape: No activity to report

Stikine Country Parks Advisory Committee: No activity to report

Pacific Water Shrew Recovery Team: No report available

FBCN Resolutions

Resolutions for consideration at FBCN AGM May 15, 2004

2004-1. Spotted Owls and Lillooet Area

2004-2. Birds and BC's Boreal Forest

2004-3. Mountain Caribou

2004-4. Protection of Fraser River Estuary

2004-5. Okanagan Water Supply

2004-6. Marine Protected Areas (draft for possible modification after May 13th Symposium)

Resolution 2004-1. Spotted Owls and Lillooet Area

Submitted by Lillooet Naturalist Society

WHEREAS the Northern Spotted Owl is the most endangered bird in Canada; its numbers in BC (only Canadian residence) have declined by 67% between 1992 and 2002, and

WHEREAS in 2003 the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection found only 14 adult Spotted Owls in 10 locations in BC and of these, the Lillooet area had 3 breeding pairs; the total number of Spotted Owls estimated for BC is at most 50 remaining (or an optimistic government estimate puts the 'at most' number at 33 remaining pairs), and

WHEREAS in 2001 the Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan recommended fourteen Protected Areas, yet only one, the South Chilcotins - Spruce Lake Provincial Park, has been designated, and

WHEREAS Spotted Owls are known to be non-migratory and one pair requires over 3,000 hectares of dense old growth in continuous forest, and

WHEREAS an interim recommendation was put forward to government in January 2003 from the Spotted Owl Recovery Team to defer logging in known Spotted Owl habitat, but logging deferrals have not been made, and logging is now occurring in up to six of the known locations of Spotted Owls, and

WHEREAS the environmental representative biologist on the Spotted Owl Recovery Team recently resigned over concern that habitat protection was not being addressed, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists request the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management and the Minister of Forests (with copies to the Lillooet MLA, Lillooet Mayor and Premier) to protect habitat for the Spotted Owl, to defer logging in known Spotted Owl habitat, to complete the Recovery Plan, and to designate the thirteen proposed Protected Areas in the Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists write the Federal Minister of Environment to ask that the federal government issue an emergency order under the Species At Risk Act to prohibit activities in BC that threaten known Spotted Owl habitat.

Resolution 2004-2. Birds and BC's Boreal Forest

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Submitted by Williams Lake Field Naturalists' Society and Timberline Trail and Nature Club

WHEREAS northeastern BC has had several land use planning processes, and recently a Canada wide conservation/industrial initiative has been formed to protect 50% of the Canadian boreal forest and manage the other half under stringent sustainable-development practices; however adequate knowledge still does not exist to recommend which specific habitat should be protected for threatened bird species in the boreal forest of northeast BC, and

WHEREAS forest certification programs require certified forest companies to protect and manage rare, threatened and endangered species, and

WHEREAS construction is underway on a new Oriented Strand Board facility in Fort St. John that will create 300 new harvesting jobs and will result in more harvesting pressure on the deciduous (and eventually mixed wood) forest of the north Peace area, and

WHEREAS the 1991 Endangered Species symposium sponsored by the Federation of BC Naturalists included a report on "The Declining Populations of Warblers in Northeastern British Columbia", and the recommendation was for northeastern songbird preserves, including unfragmented stands of balsam poplar flood plain, riparian forest edge, white spruce, white spruce-aspen-poplar-birch and trembling aspen forest, yet this recommendation has not been acted on, and

WHEREAS in 1999 the Timberline Trail and Nature Club requested protection of habitat for several threatened bird species in the Peace area (including Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk, Canada Warbler and Philadelphia Vireo), and yet no Wildlife Habitat Areas, or other special management areas, were established as critical habitat for these birds, and

WHEREAS more recently the draft 2003 Standards for Managing Identified Wildlife listed these species: Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and the Connecticut Warbler, and yet there still does not exist sufficient inventory data to determine exactly which areas should be designated as Wildlife Habitat Areas for threatened bird species, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Ministry of Forests and the private forest companies in northeast BC, to cooperate to conduct breeding bird surveys in summer 2004 to determine which areas require protection (including inventories for the Identified Wildlife bird species and other threatened bird species such as Broad-winged Hawk, Canada Warbler and Philadelphia Vireo), and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists request the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, together with the Ministry of Forests, to establish Wildlife Habitat Areas to protect critical habitat for these bird species.

Resolution 2004-3. Mountain Caribou

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Submitted by West Kootenay Naturalists' Association

WHEREAS mountain caribou (an ecotype of the more widespread woodland caribou) herds are found throughout the Interior Wet Belt of BC from the Kootenays, through Wells Gray to northeast of Prince George; and, unlike their more northern cousins that often migrate long distances and usually feed on terrestrial lichens, mountain caribou feed in the deep snow of winter primarily on arboreal lichens and tend to migrate relatively short distances from low elevation valleys and slopes in fall and early winter to subalpine areas in late winter and early spring, and alpine meadows in summer, and

WHEREAS mountain caribou are designated: red-listed by BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC), threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and endangered under the Endangered Species Act in the portion of their range that extends into the United States (northern Idaho), and

WHEREAS the herds are declining with increasing numbers the further south the location (with the Hart Ranges and North Cariboo Mountains herds declining the least, while the South Purcells and South Selkirks herds in the Kootenays are declining the most), and

WHEREAS since the 1850's mountain caribou have been extirpated from 40% of their former habitat in the Kootenays and the Kootenay herds have further declined by as much as 50% or more over the past 10 years, into fragmented sub-populations that are functionally disconnected from each other and from larger healthier core populations (only 49 caribou in South Selkirks, 20 in South Purcells and 125 in Central Selkirks), and

WHEREAS the decline has resulted from several inter-related factors stemming from the logging of old growth forests which provide the herd's winter food source of lichen and their shelter; and it is logging which has fragmented their habitat, and created early seral stage forests which nurture higher densities of moose, deer and elk, and this in turn has nurtured more predators (mostly wolves for the northern herds, and cougar for the southern herds) and now these predators also kill the mountain caribou; and it is the logging roads which have increased predator and human access, and

WHEREAS the decline is likely being hastened by increased human motorized access, through snowmobiles, ATVs, and helicopters used for skiing and hiking access, which all disturb the mountain caribou and possibly drive them closer to predators, and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management is now proposing to change the Higher Level Plan (HLP) for the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan (KBLUP), and that these changes will modify the management zones and forest retention logging guidelines for mountain caribou habitat management within the Kootenay-Boundary region of southeast British Columbia, but although the proposed changes represent a marginal improvement over present management requirements for some sub-populations (requirements that have already contributed to catastrophic population declines), for other sub-populations the proposed changes are a step backward from present management, and

WHEREAS the proposed changes in the Kootenay Higher Level Plan fall significantly short of the management regime that is required to halt the severe decline in mountain caribou, much less begin to recover the sub-populations to viable levels, and

WHEREAS this seems a repeat of the management approach undertaken over the past 20 years with respect to both the Vancouver Island Marmot and the Spotted Owl, where important forest habitat was logged, and then followed by unprecedented decline of these two species, together with millions of dollars spent on the recovery of Vancouver Island Marmot, and yet if strong actions are taken now for Mountain Caribou there is still hope that declining population trends can be reversed, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management in the Kootenay-Boundary Higher Level Plan to use the precautionary principle* and:

- designate full protection for more valley areas,
- designate more forest retention to provide connectivity, and
- restrict motorized vehicle and helicopter access in important caribou habitat areas, and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the BC Government to adhere to the precautionary principle in managing all Mountain Caribou herds, so that the declining population trend can be reversed, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists write the federal Minister of Environment to ask that the Canadian Wildlife Service monitor Mountain Caribou herds and their habitat management, with a view to assisting with habitat protection before this species is pushed closer to extirpation.

**(Precautionary Principle defined in the 1992 UN Convention on Biodiversity as "Where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat.")*

Resolution 2004-4. Protection of Fraser River Estuary

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Submitted by Vancouver Natural History Society

Whereas the lower Fraser River Estuary, including Boundary Bay, Roberts Bank and Sturgeon Bank, provides vital habitat for millions of migrating and wintering birds, far exceeds the international criteria for both Ramsar Site (Wetland of International Importance) and Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Site and meets stringent international and national criteria under the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program, and

Whereas based on the number of species meeting these criteria, the Fraser River Estuary Important Bird Area ranks number one out of 597 designated IBA sites in Canada, and

Whereas neither the Provincial nor Federal government has officially recognized the IBA status of the Fraser River Estuary, nor adopted either the Ramsar or the WHSRN designations in the estuary apart from the limited Alaksen National Wildlife Area, and

Whereas the Fraser River Estuary provides habitat for over 310 species of birds, 48 mammals, five reptiles, ten amphibians and over 60 species of fish, many with commercial importance including the world-renowned Fraser River salmon, and

Whereas the Fraser River Estuary has been subjected to constant human development pressure and loss of habitat over the last 150 years, leading to the loss of several local populations of wildlife species such as snowshoe hare, western spotted skunk, nesting western bluebird, burrowing owl, and Oregon spotted frog, and

Whereas this development pressure has increased considerably in the last 20 years, with urban sprawl, transportation networks, major port developments and expansion on Roberts Bank and other continual loss of habitat, and

Whereas the limited riverine forest is shrinking in size, and

Whereas the deliberate and accidental introduction of marine and terrestrial alien species is a continual threat to the ecosystem, and

Whereas the Fraser River Action Plan, a cooperative focused plan which would help protect the Fraser River Estuary, has been folded into the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative and subsequently focus seems to have been lost, while on-going, incremental habitat and wildlife loss in the estuary continues, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Federal, Provincial and Regional Governments to officially recognize the Fraser River Estuary Important Bird Area designation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Federal, Provincial and Regional Governments to cooperate to protect both marine and upland habitat to ensure the protection and restoration of wildlife populations in the estuary, and to continue the research and monitoring that was initiated under the Fraser River Action Plan and that recommendations from that work should be implemented and not lost as a result of the submergence of the Fraser River Action Plan into the Georgia Basin Study.

Resolution 2004-5. Okanagan Water

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submitted by Thompson-Okanagan Regional Directors

Whereas water supply is critical for the predominately dry Okanagan Valley, and the paper entitled, "Okanagan Water - The Introduction of an Eight-point Action Plan" identifies the critical need to deal with primary concerns relating to water supply in the Okanagan Valley, including those of problems of inadequate overall resource planning, fragmentation of responsibility and jurisdiction, and wasteful water-use practices, which are all being compounded by increases in water demand from rapid population growth, plus the potential effects of climate change, and

Whereas eight measure are presented in the said paper to deal with these emerging challenges, namely:

1. Assess sustainable water availability for the entire Okanagan Basin and incorporate this into a comprehensive long-term development plan.
2. Set up one unified water supply authority, to replace the existing multiplicity of water undertakings around the valley, with the new authority having the power and the facilities to adequately and efficiently provide sustainable water supplies.
3. Establish and encourage a greater general water-saving ethic by all.
4. All municipal water supply to be properly metered.
5. All municipal water supply to be appropriately priced.
6. Make water conservation an integral part of the planning process in the Okanagan.

7. All Official Community Plans to accept that water servicing capacity is eventually a limiting factor for development in the Okanagan, and that all development be regulated so as not to exceed sustainable long-term water servicing capacity.
8. Planning processes to normally avoid allowing developers to plant grass where water is a commodity in short supply, with all Official Community Plans to require developers and municipalities to use suitable layouts, lot finishes and landscape treatments (such as encouraging Xeriscaping) that minimize water demands, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists formally endorse its full support for action on and the implementation of the said "Okanagan Water - The Introduction of an Eight-point Action Plan", and that this endorsement be advised by confirming letters urging prompt action thereon, to be sent to the list of twenty-one persons and organizations, including provincial regional and local governments.

Resolution 2004-6. Marine Protected Areas

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Note: This resolution is being put forward by the Resolution Committee in anticipation of a resolution developing from the FBCN Marine Protected Areas symposium on May 13, 2004. The content of the resolution below is drawn from the FBCN Draft Marine Protected Area policy of May 2001. It is of a general nature and may have some specific points added or modified following discussion at the Symposium.

Whereas the Federation of BC Naturalists supports the following goals for conservation of marine ecosystems:

- Maintain and restore ecological processes within all BC marine ecosystems,
- Maintain and restore biodiversity within all BC marine ecosystems,
- Ensure that all uses of marine wildlife and plants are sustainable, and
- Educate the public and decision makers on the intrinsic value of all marine life, and

Whereas the Federation of BC Naturalists recognizes that a holistic approach to marine ecosystems is necessary for management and restoration plans to be successful, and

Whereas regulatory systems must be put in place that

- value the intrinsic worth of the sea,
- are designed to protect complete marine ecosystems, not just economic species,
- appreciate unrecognized benefits, not just recognized users, and
- take responsibility for prevention of adverse effects, not just damage control, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that Federation of BC Naturalists urge the federal and provincial governments to create a comprehensive Marine Protected Area system

for BC which provides a complete network of refugia and harvest-free areas for replenishment of stocks, which should cover a minimum of 10% of the coastal and inshore waters, and which should be put in place by the year 2010.

FBCN Finance Reports

Treasurer Report

By Donald McLellan

This was the first full year of operations using the revised format for the Statement of Operations which was intended to provide more clarity and separation of the operating results, the internally restricted fund and the designated grant funds. Overall, it appears to have been a success.

The following are my comment on the 2003 financial results.

Operations

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Receipts	\$ 113,456	\$ 122,687	\$ 147,471	\$ 135,123
Expenses	122,108	134,332	130,700	113,938
Excess/(Deficit)	(8,652)	(11,645)	16,771	21,185

Receipts – there is one significant change for 2003 versus prior years and that is the BC Gaming funds and the policies concerning applications and spending of the monies. Going forward the funding will be provided for specified project and program work only. The funding is received late in the calendar year so the bulk of the monies received in any given year will be spent in the next year. 2003 was a transition year and only a portion of the late year funding receipts were spent by year end (\$7,000 out of the \$18,000 received). Applications for 2004 and onward will have to detail specific projects or activities for which the funds are to be used and the monies can no longer be used toward general and administrative expenses, except where those costs are part of the project or program.

The President's appeal was again very well supported (\$16,721) and the proceeds from the two general meetings of \$3,878 was up over the previous year.

Expenses – expenses for 2003 were generally in line with the budget and the previous year. The insurance premiums were lower than 2002 but are still higher than they were prior to New York's 9/11 incident and the FBCN is absorbing the difference between the premiums and the recoveries from the clubs. The major expenditure is the ongoing subsidy for the production of the BC Naturalist. Additional savings were generated through the replacement of paid contract work on the BC Naturalist with volunteers.

Overall, the operating results were in line with expectations for the year.

Internally Restricted Funds – the bulk of the Internally Restricted funds from 2002 combined with this year’s receipt of \$3,880 from the BC Naturalists Foundation went unspent through 2003. A total of \$5,045 was spent on Club Support, the Educational Fund and the Conservation Fund. \$2,000 of the BCNF funds were used for the ER Warden’s gathering. A net surplus of \$3,323 from the 2003 ER Warden’s gathering is being carried forward for the next event.

At year end there was a balance of \$22,000, excluding the ER Warden’s funds, being carried forward.

Designated Project Grants – these FBCN administered funds follow the deferred revenue policy and the income receipts in a given year match the expenditures. The administration fee the FBCN earns is included in Operating revenue as an offset to the administrative expenses the FBCN incurs to handle these funds. There was increased spending on Wildlife Watch and Living by Water projects over the previous year.

Summary – 2003 was close to a break even year in terms of financial operating performance and was close to the budgeted expectations. This resulted in a reduction in unrestricted funds of \$4,700 leaving a total of just over \$25,000. At year end the FBCN was still awaiting a significant bequest which has since been received. Most of these monies will be directed to the Internally Restricted funds and the challenge will be to get these funds out into these activities.