

# BC Parks Interpretation

## 2008 Summer Season Report

### Overview

In 2008, through the cooperation and support of Ministry of Environment, BC Nature (FBCN), BC Conservation Corp (CC), Human Resources Canada (HRC), Park Facility Operators and BC Parks, 37 interpretive positions were funded in 26 BC Parks.

This report includes some of the highlights of the season and provides an overview of an interpreter's work.



Rebecca Baines and Daniel investigating a slug.  
Wells Grey Provincial Park.  
Photo courtesy of Merlin Blackwell

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*The programs and Park Naturalists are fantastic and wonderful with the kids. The information they share is invaluable. I hope the programs will always be offered. Keep up the great work. I wish more parks offered these programs.*

*-Gail Bogren, Rathtrevor Provincial Park, 2008*

# Park Interpretation Highlights in 2008

*Hopefully due to your efforts, people become more aware of the need to treat places like this with respect. Thanks again!*

- Marja Blasé , Park visitor, Rathtrevor Provincial Park

During the summer of 2008, 133,198 visitors attended interpretive programs in 26 BC Parks. Thirty-seven interpreters worked to educate and inform park visitors on the values and variety of things to do in parks, engaging people in walks and interesting, fun, environmental and historical educational programs.

## Program Locations

Interpretive positions were provided at:

### Lower Mainland Region

- Alice Lake/Birkenhead
- Cultus
- Golden Ears
- Porteau Cove
- Sasquatch

### Kootenay Region

- Kokanee
- Kikomun /Wasa

### Okanagan Region

- Manning
- Okanagan Lake

### Omineca Region

- Mount Robson

### Peace Region

- Liard Hotsprings

### Skeena Region

- Lakelse
- Tyhee

### Thompson Region

- Lac le Jeune
- Monck
- Shuswap
- Wells Gray

### Vancouver Island Region

- Goldstream
- Gordon Bay
- Miracle
- Rathtrevor/Newcastle/Little Qualicum/Sproat
- Ruckle



# A Day in the Life of an Interpreter



Alice Lake Provincial Park

The general outline of duties for a park interpreter is diverse, and includes research, program development, program advertising, promotion and delivery to the public. The interpreters are highly energetic, self-starters with a deep respect for the natural environment and a passion to share this with visitors. In general, during a workweek of 35 hours, an interpreter delivers a minimum of seven programs.

A normal workweek consists of:

- 4 evening programs
- roving before all evening programs (one hour minimum) to promote programs and provide information to the public
- minimum of 2 Jerry's Rangers programs and one additional walk, extended hike or special event
- special events (Parks Day and BC Day) and group and/or school programs
- program advertising
- submission of all program outlines, monthly statistics and final report

Interpreters are encouraged to provide information on how residents and visitors can recreate and enjoy the BC Parks system. Guest speakers are invited to expand the repertoire of program delivery and introduce visitors to special features of the local area. For those unfamiliar or uncomfortable with going out on their own, longer guided hikes provide an opportunity for visitors to see new areas of the park and to have some physical exercise.

Jerry's Rangers programs focus on a variety of physical activities and learning opportunities to help younger visitors have an enjoyable time while they are in parks. When children have completed their certificate by earning eight stickers, they are awarded a button. This incentive has often led to families staying in parks for an extra day or two to enable their children to complete the certificate.



The value of an interpreter working in BC Parks is widespread. Interpreters strive to educate visitors about the natural and cultural history of the park, and to explain about environmental concerns such as climate change, invasive species, and mountain pine beetle. Interpreters also act as a promotional asset for park visitors through their engaging programs, which greatly add to their visiting experience. In this way park interpreters help park visitors appreciate the natural and cultural features that make each park a special place.

## Parks Day

Parks Day is an annual celebration held on the third Saturday of July, and consists of a multitude of events in parks and historic sites across Canada.

Interpreters are encouraged to organize activities that focus on a variety of topics, such as:

- why parks are created;
- the global significance of parks for natural area preservation and environmental education;
- the public's role in the stewardship of parks

Parks Day celebrations were held in all BC Parks with an interpreter.

## B.C. Day

Park interpreters commemorated the province's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer with special "150" programs on the BC Day weekend.



# Program Highlights

## Manning Provincial Park



Angela McCormick, CC  
Jerry's Ranger Program, 2008

All interpreters are encouraged to provide Ministry messages and park themes in an entertaining manner to park visitors. In Manning Park 10,085 visitors attended interpretive programs which were given by Angela McCormick and Moira LePatourel. An example of one of Manning Park's programs started with the advertisement:

Warped Game of Manning Jeopardy  
Lightning Lake Amphitheatre  
Test your smarts in this audience participation game  
that's a warped cross between Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune!

The **Manning Park Jeopardy** program seeks to discover Manning wildlife and plant vegetation, focusing on covering all the principle messages and themes in a fun and interactive way, as visitors participated in this high energy game that often had upwards of 100 people attending the program on summer evenings.

# Okanagan Lake Provincial Park

Interpreters are encouraged to provide relevant programs on threatened or endangered species. Here is an example of one of Kelly Toots programs, the interpreter at Okanagan Provincial Park;

Rattle snakes are a part of the Okanagan ecosystem and can be a worry when hiking the trails. Come on by and learn a little more about them and what to do if you happen to run across one.

Live Specimen!

This **Rattle Rattle Rattle** program highlighted that rattle snakes are really interesting creatures that don't pose a high threat to our safety if we are cautious around them and give them their space. Emphasis was placed on leaving snakes alone, staying on hiking trails and out of tall grass.

This program regularly had upwards of 70 people attending on summer evenings.



Antelope brush



Rattlesnake



## Shuswap Lake Provincial Park

Shuswap Park had 4091 visitors attend interpretive programs this season. James Matthews and Jennifer Mackie successfully presented their programs to 4091 visitors. An example of one of their programs started with the advertisement;

BC is Bear Country. Bears are everywhere! Come see how you can be bear aware!

This **BC is Bear Country** program highlighted bear safety tips for avoiding and dealing with bears and to respect bears by doing everything possible to avoid contact. In this program interpreters emphasized appropriate behaviour and reactions when in close proximity to a bear.

This program regularly had upwards of 70 people attending on summer evenings



James Matthews, Shuswap Lake Provincial Park  
Jerry's Rangers Program, 2008



# Special Program Themes:

## Mountain Pine Beetle

There were eight BC Parks providing mountain pine beetle programs to the public. These included Lakelse Lake, Monck, Lac Le Jeune, Mt. Robson, Okanagan Lake, Shuswap Lake, Kikomun and Manning. These highly informative programs help the public to better understand the current situation regarding pine beetle, what to expect and how parks are dealing with mountain pine beetle.

## Climate Change

There were 252 climate change programs delivered to the public this summer. Interpreters delivered programs which included the following messaging:

Climate change is a major global challenge of this century.

Interpreters incorporated these general ideas into their programming;

- BC is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- BC is preparing for the impacts of climate change.
- BC Parks protect ecosystems that store carbon and help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- BC Parks protects important habitat, which by accommodating both latitudinal and elevational movement, help species cope with climate change.

An example of how climate change was incorporated into summer programming was delivered in Rath Trevor, with their hit multi-naturalist program; *The Climate Capers*. This program highlighted that our future climate and how it changes depends on decisions we make in our everyday lives. The aim was to make the public aware as to what are greenhouse gases and to remember at least three things they can do to help reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions. One of the end results of this program was to leave the audience with positive ideas for change and to help the environment, rather than feel depressed about the large issue of climate change. This program saw dramatic scene props as well as a superhero costume for ‘Captain Carbon Chaos’ and for ‘Nature Girl’, who paraded around the stage while debating the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

*“Multi-naturalist programs also allowed the staff to work together on a creative project, which was great overall for staff morale and helped serve as inspiration for many of our other programs. I know that we’re lucky to have the resources and staff to be able to do this type of program, and I recommend that they be continued into the future. They are a SUPER addition to Rath Trevor’s interpretive repertoire – and what park naturalist doesn’t want an excuse to run around dressed in spandex?”*

- Pam Murray, Rath Trevor Provincial Park, 2008

# Jerry's Rangers



*“The turn out for the Jerry’s Rangers was great and sometimes even better than our evening programs. The evening programs were full of kids as well, but for the younger ones, 7:30 pm was getting too late for them. I think that the Jerry’s Rangers should have more focus in the coming years.”*

- Veronica Reid, Kokanee Provincial Park, 2008



Our parks are very special places for kids (and grown-ups too). In fact, BC Parks has a special set of rules that Jerry's Rangers promise to follow whenever they are in a park. Jerry's Rangers promise to:



1. Help keep their park clean
2. Respect other visitors
3. Think before they shout
4. Obey all safety rules
5. Respect all living things
6. Keep pets on leashes
7. Always be careful near fire
8. Tell someone where they are going and when they will return
9. Leave things belonging to the park in the park
10. Have a great time in BC Parks!



Use these activities to learn more about the Jerry's Rangers stickers you've earned, or the stickers you hope to earn! If you'd like to earn stickers, attend a Jerry's Rangers program at a B.C. provincial park!



*Jerry Ranger motto and stickers from the Jerry Ranger Activity Book*

Jerry's Rangers is an environmental education program for children ages 5 – 12 (and their parents!) that help them to learn about the park, its plants, animals, and history. Basic hiking and camping skills and bear safety encourage children to have a safe time when they are in parks. Climate change programs encourage children on how they can help to look after the planet. Other programs show children how they can help to look after parks and how parks help make B.C. a great place to be! This summer season **664 Jerry's Rangers** programs were offered in BC Parks with interpreters.

Activities are diverse and may include nature walks, scavenger hunts, recycling games, role plays and the list goes on. These programs aim to educate children about how to safely enjoy and value BC Parks.

Below are two examples of Jerry's Rangers programs.

The first was held at Birkenhead and Alice Lake Provincial Parks, entitled “**Little Bryan Bear**” - a kid's version of an evening “Bear Facts” program, inspired by a resident bear that lives in Birkenhead Lake Provincial Park named ‘Little Bryan’. This resident black bear is named after the PFO Bryan Legg. Eric Hall, a Birkenhead Lake PFO, had some good bear stories to tell about ‘Little Bryan’ when he was a guest presenter on two occasions at Birkenhead. It's a fun way to teach children what the meaning of resident bear is and how to be bear safe while camping and hiking in bear country. This program highlighted bear safety and featured a trivia game with the interpreter dressed up in a bear costume.

Another Jerry's Rangers program, “**Lakeside Scavenger Hunt**”, focused on bringing kids out to explore the forest in a scavenger hunt to remember! Children learnt to identify a variety of species of plants and animals in a fun and interactive way. The kids were put into four teams that competed against each other to complete the tasks of the hunt. Kids learnt to name and identify five local plants and animals including an osprey, a cedar tree, skunk cabbage, Douglas squirrel, huckleberry bush, and mallard ducks that live in the park on an adventurous walking tour in the forest and along the beach.





Jerry Ranger program in progress  
Photo courtesy of Emily Skinner

*“As a result of having such a positive experience working with children this summer, I would like to pursue a career in the field of education.”*

- Emily Skinner, Goldstream Provincial Park, 2008

*“On a personal note, becoming an interpreter for BC Parks has been such a wonderful and unforgettable experience. I feel a sense of accomplishment as I have educated many brilliant children and adults about BC’s environment. I also feel that I have connected them a little more to nature as many of the campers at Porteau Cove come from the city and do not have as much opportunity to feel a strong connection with nature.”*

- Sarah Derosiers, Porteau Cove Provincial Park, 2008



# Program Attendance

Figure 1:

Figure 1 displays the combined total of people attending evening programs, Jerry's Rangers programs, and roving communication.

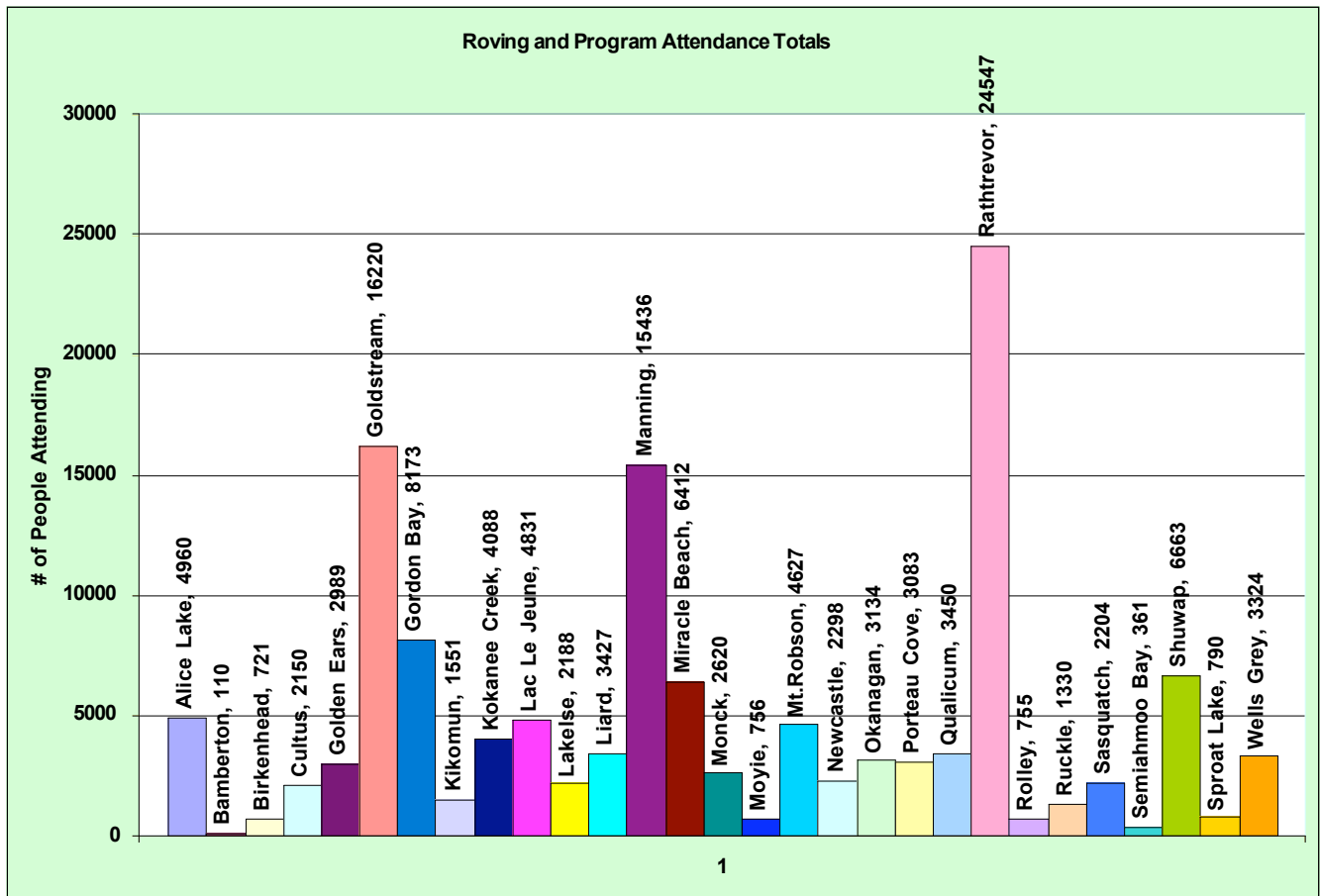


Figure 2:

Figure 2 displays roving numbers, which represent the number of people reached for encouraging public to attend programs. A portion of each interpreter's day includes talking with park visitors throughout the campground and day use areas. Contacts are only counted as a roving number if a dialogue occurs.

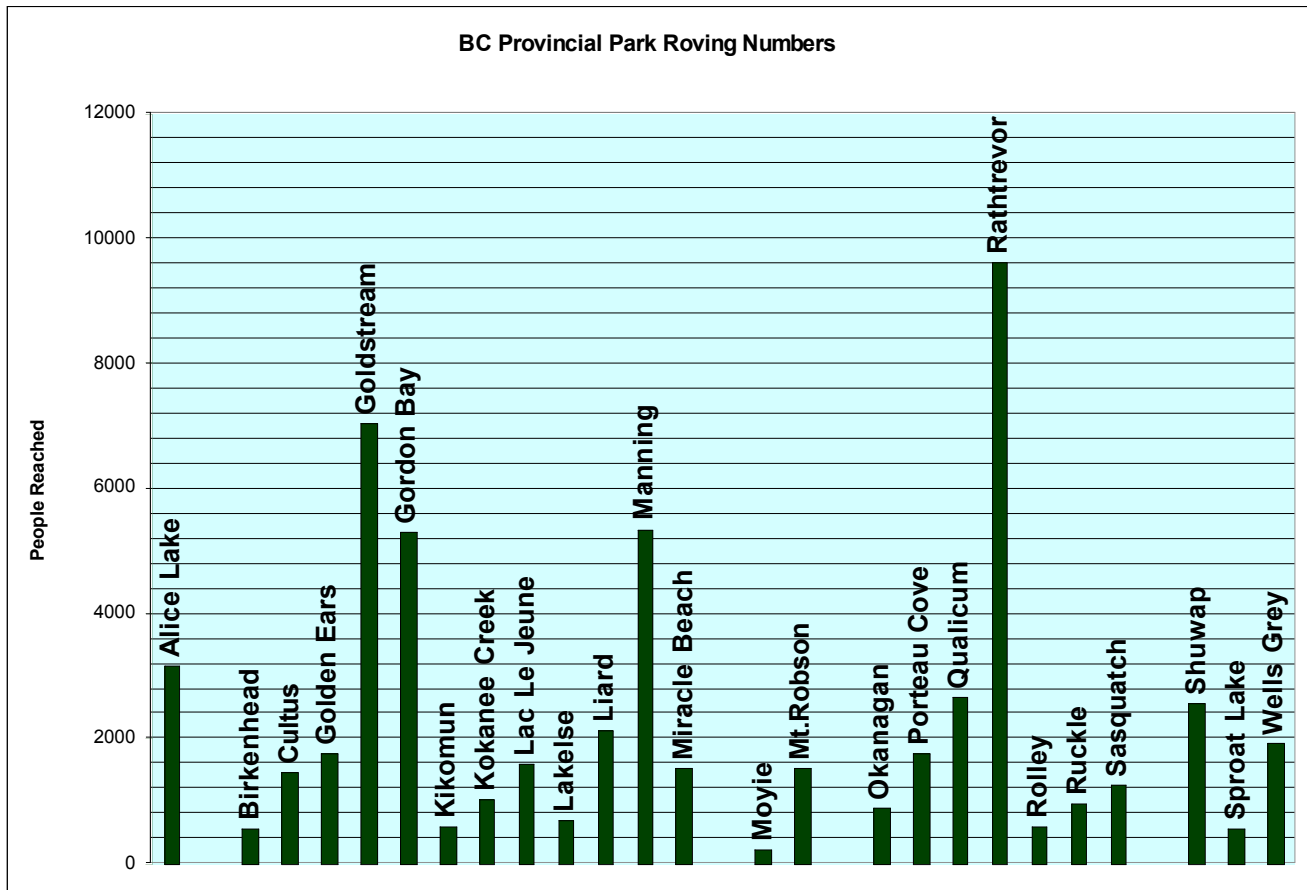
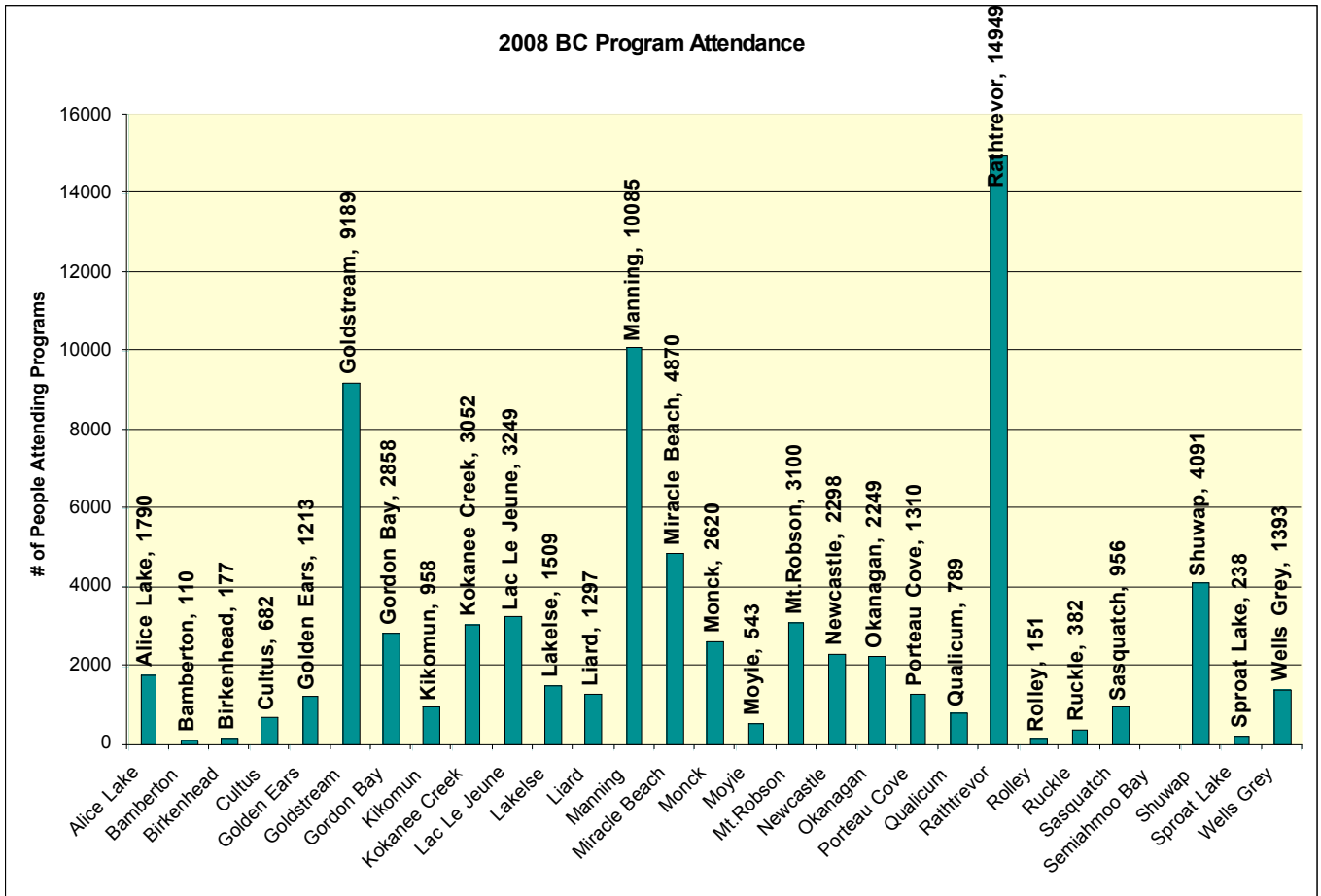


Figure 3:

Figure 3 displays actual attendance at evening programs and Jerry’s Rangers programs.



## Public Outreach

There were an estimated 50 guest speakers attending interpreter programs to deliver presentations. For all guest speakers the interpreters were responsible for ensuring the guest presentation was relevant, advertising the guest program, and introducing and thanking the presenter. This helps to strengthen local community connections. A few examples of guest speakers and organizations include: Water Wise, BC Wildlife Park, Adventure Smart, Learn to Fish, Stream Keepers Society, the Otesha Project, and the Vancouver Island Coastal Fire centre.

In addition, parks interpreters provided weekly program schedules to local tourism offices, the BC Parks website and some media releases to surrounding communities.

## Conclusion

The 2008 BC Parks interpretation program was a great success with 133,198 park visitors engaged in entertaining and enlightening programs. Thirty-seven interpreters were employed in 26 Provincial Parks. They delivered a vast variety of programs on the key messages of Climate Change, Mountain Pine Beetle, and the 150 Celebration as well as on the natural and cultural history and recreational opportunities of BC Parks. Interpretation serves as an enticement for many park visitors to return year after year and is a key component of a world class park system.

Report prepared by Lara Tisseur October 2008  
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### Photo Credits:

BC Ministry of Environment Regional Map: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/main/regions.html>

Jerry the Moose: (BC Ministry of the Environment) <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/kidspage/kidsrang.html>

Jerry Ranger certificate: (BC Ministry of the Environment) [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/kidspage/jerry\\_rang.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/kidspage/jerry_rang.html)

Rattlesnake: (free license) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Crotalus\\_atrox\\_\(2\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Crotalus_atrox_(2).jpg)

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