



## ERCB Approves Shell Waterton (68) Gas Well But Denies Pipeline Applications

by Carolyn Aspeslet, Executive Director

On March 9, 2011, the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) issued a decision on the Waterton 68, which approves, with conditions, Shell Canada applications to drill a sour gas well in the Screwdriver Creek area of the Castle and amend its license to add a fuel-gas compressor. The ERCB has denied applications for a fuel gas pipeline, a production pipeline, and a gas battery.

The hearing panel determined that it is in the public interest to drill the well, noting that it will provide valuable data about the nature of the resource in this area. In addition, the well will require a small amount of new disturbance as it utilizes some existing infrastructure.

The ERCB imposed four conditions on the approvals, directing Shell to conduct an emergency response planning exercise, monitor traffic and control dust on a nearby road, and submit plans for any well testing to the ERCB for approval. The ERCB also noted 14 commitments made by Shell during the course of the hearing, and made 12 recommendations to the company.

The ERCB has denied applications for a gas battery, a fuel gas pipeline, and a production pipeline. The panel was not prepared to grant these applications given the information provided at the hearing pertaining to the need for Shell to improve its operating practices in the area.

Regarding the pipeline applications, the rejection stated:

*"The Board directs that Shell must better demonstrate that it can properly operate its infrastructure. This could be achieved by, among other things,*

- *reducing the pipeline failure frequency on the Carbondale and Castle River systems,*

- *improving its ability to detect leaks and having fewer off-lease emissions,*
- *adhering to its traffic code of conduct,*
- *following through with its commitments, and*
- *conducting an independent review of its operations and sharing the results with WAG [Waterton Advisory Group] and the community."*

You can read the full decision at: <http://www.ercb.ca/docs/documents/decisions/2011/2011-ABERCB-007.pdf> •



**Don't let this take place in the Castle.  
Write to the Premier and say NO to  
logging the Castle! (see page 3)**

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Carolyn Aspeslet, Executive Director  
(address/phone/e-mail as above)

Wendy Ryan, Stewardship & Outreach

#### **Upcoming Meeting**

Members are welcome at directors meetings.  
Contact the office to be put on the notification list.

20th Annual AWA – Climb for the Wilderness. April 16, 2011  
More information at: <http://climbforwilderness.ca/news.asp>

Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday, May 14.  
See separate notice.

#### **Membership**

May is membership month. Thank you to all of you who have already renewed your membership and if you haven't, please do. Note the CanadaHelps button on the website for donations by credit card—and thanks to those who have used it already!

#### **Newsletter**

Editor: Carolyn Aspeslet.  
This newsletter welcomes comments and/or submissions from members and others. Please send submissions by mail or e-mail to the office. Please check with the office for submission deadlines.

The opinions, evaluations, claims and assertions contained in articles appearing in the Castle Wilderness News are the responsibility of their authors, and may not reflect the policies of the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition. The office takes responsibility for articles, notices, etc., for which an author is not identified.

Production: Murray Coppold. Thanks to Rosemary Coppold, who addresses, stamps, stuffs and mails the newsletter to you.

*Donations to CCWC are tax creditable  
and greatly appreciated.*

*Alberta's new Community Spirit Program means that both  
you and CCWC will benefit more from your contributions.*



## Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2011 from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM at the Lebel Mansion in Pincher Creek. In addition to AGM business, it will feature a talk and be followed by a hike in the Castle Wilderness.

#### **The Castle: A jewel in the Crown of the Continent**

Speaker: Sarah Elmeligi, Senior Conservation Planner  
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Southern Alberta

Sarah Elmeligi has a Masters of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies degree from the University of Northern British Columbia. Her thesis investigated the impacts of bear-viewing tourism on grizzly bear behaviour and visitor satisfaction/perceptions of impact. This research experience combined with her Bachelor of Science degree, zoology major, from the University of Alberta has provided Sarah with an intimate understanding of ecosystem ecology from theory and research methods/results to applicable and adaptive management options. She has extensive experience in science interpretation; from program development and delivery to visitor centre design and construction. Sarah comes to CPAWS from the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) where she worked extensively on the Cabinet-Purcell Mountain Corridor Project. Working with Y2Y has increased her understanding of large landscapes and the necessary programs to connect them. She is passionate about animal behaviour and ecology, living sustainably, and exploring as much of this planet as she can by foot, bike, rock-climbing shoe, and snorkel. •



## Thanks

CCWC again sends warmest thanks to our members, funders, donors, and volunteers. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Our major funders are: **Wilburforce Foundation, Fanwood Foundation, Alberta Stewardship Network, Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op, and the Alberta Conservation Association.** Thanks to you all. •



## Upcoming Event

CCWC will host a presentation by Uldis Silins of the University of Alberta entitled:

### Source Water Protection in a Changing Climate: Implications of natural disturbance on water supplies from Alberta's eastern slopes.

Friday April 29, 2011  
7:00 PM Lebel Mansion

**Abstract:** Source water protection is considered a top priority area among North American water professionals and is particularly important in Alberta, where the vast majority of usable surface water supplies for settled regions of the province originate from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. However, the concept of threats to source water landscapes, and thus vulnerability of water supplies, is not well developed in source water protection frameworks.

The Southern Rockies Watershed Project was established shortly after the 2003 Lost Creek wildfire (> 210 km<sup>2</sup>) to describe both the early magnitude, and subsequent trajectory of recovery of a broad range of watershed "values" in the high water yielding region of Alberta's Southern Rockies. The research area located near the Crowsnest Pass (AB) encompasses seven large instrumented watersheds including burned (3), burned & salvage logged (2), and unburned watersheds (2). A thumbnail sketch of impacts from the Lost Creek wildfire over the first five years after the fire will be discussed, including magnitude of initial effects on water production, water quality, and stream ecology and their potential implications on downstream water supplies.

The concepts of vulnerability and risk will be discussed in the context of how these likely need to be reflected in Source Water Protection frameworks currently being developed in Alberta (Land Use Framework) and elsewhere in North America.

## Castle Special Places Updates

Representatives of the Castle Special Place working group met with Ken Faulkner, the Premier's Executive Assistant for Southern Alberta in early February. The meeting went well, with Mr. Faulkner agreeing to pass on and discuss the working group's concerns with the Premier and the MLAs.

The CCWC, CPAWS and Sierra Club Canada worked with Lethbridge College's Citizen Society Research Lab on a survey to poll citizens regarding their views on protection of the Castle. The survey was conducted in Lethbridge and Coaldale. The final report has not yet been released, but we will pass on the information once it has been received. We hope to conduct this survey in a larger area in the future.

## Logging Scheduled to Start June 10.

If you haven't written a letter to state your concerns over the pending logging please do; even if you already have, write again. Visit <http://stopcastlelogging.org> to get tips on letter writing and information on what you can do to stop the logging in the Castle.

Katrina Kellner is working on a *Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Industry Advisory* to inform Alberta businesses of the impacts of logging and other developments on outdoor recreation and tourism that these businesses rely on for their livelihood. The Stop Castle Logging group has been very busy working to get information out and bring awareness of the logging. They have developed a postcard that you can sign and send to the government. If you would like to help in the distribution of the postcards, they will be available at the CCWC office. Also, there will be an exhibition of aerial photos of the area that is scheduled to be cut at the Bowman Art Centre in Lethbridge in late April to early May. •



CCWC at AWA Tower Climb 2009



# Executive Director's Report

by Carolyn Aspeslet

## Controversial Provincial Parks Act, Bill 29 Suspended

If you have ever wondered if the letters you write to your MLAs or the Premier have any impact, the answer is YES. Thanks to the more than 1000 people who love their Alberta Parks and wrote letters, the province suspended the discussion on Bill 29 in the legislature in late November 2010. However the plan is to bring the bill back in 2011 with amendments. Amending the Bill is not the answer as this bill has serious flaws and needs to be rewritten.

Keep the pressure on! Minister Ady has said that she will be seeking more public consultation in regards to what Albertans want. So now is the time; have your say. More letters are needed to remind decision makers how important our parks and wilderness areas are to you. Write or email the Premier and tell your personal stories, cc your letters to Minister Ady, your MLA and to members of the opposition parties. Follow up with a phone call to your local MLA. Letters don't need to be long, 150–250 words are fine.

## Other Updates

Late in the fall, the CCWC sent a letter to Alberta Transportation requesting that the speed limit be reduced through the West Castle wetlands ecological reserve. Alberta Transportation responded that they did not believe that a reduced speed limit was necessary at this time.

This year, the CCWC will be working to increase the number of stewards reporting within the Castle. We will be offering a stewardship workshop and training day, and we will be printing a new stewardship brochure and reporting form. These forms will also be available on the website, should you wish to print one off yourself. When out spending time in the Castle please consider taking 5 minutes to fill out a report form on what you see, then submit it to the CCWC office. We are also working on setting up a new database to store and coordinate all the stewardship information collected over the years. If you have skills with building a database and/or data input and have some extra time to volunteer we would love to have you. Wendy Ryan has agreed to take over coordination of the hike schedule for the coming year. She has been working very hard with our volunteer leaders to set a schedule of hikes that will have something for everyone. We hope to have the hiking schedule out by mid-April.

It has been a long time coming, but we now have our final approvals and paperwork to proceed with the Interpretive Kiosk. The kiosk will be located just past the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve where the serviced and maintained road ends. The kiosk will serve a multi-functional purpose for all agencies involved in managing our public lands, and will provide interpretive and educational information about the biological and botanical conservation values of the WCWER that are the specific interests of CCWC. •



*Riparian Stewards' training day.*

*Photo by Penny Tweedie*