



## Winter in the Castle

by James Tweedie, President

Welcome to Spring! No crocus buds here yet, but the first bluebird greeted me this morning! Mark your calendars for our Tenth Anniversary AGM, June 17-18 (see p. 2) and get out your runners for the annual AWA/CPAWS Calgary Tower Climb, April 29. Last year the CCWC team raised over \$500 in donations for conservation programs in the province. Let's do it again (call James at 628-2422 for details).

### Logging Continues

Winter in the Castle was as beautiful as ever, although the lower elevations seem to have received less snow than usual and more skidoos. At the north end, Atlas Lumber proceeded with their logging of the Snowshoe Creek cut blocks (120 hectares) despite our appeals to Darryl Johnson, Regional Manager Alberta Forest Service, to Dave Coutts, MLA, and to Hon. Gary Mar, Minister of the Environment, calling on them to respect the stated management principles of the new Forest Land Use Zone. Two hundred truck loads of mature timber are now waiting to be hauled out. A sidebar to this was the discovery in February by Mike Sawyer and Mike Judd that Atlas had built an unauthorized snow bridge for access to the Sartoris haul road. Mild weather conditions had rendered the bridge a liability for fish habitat in Lynx Creek. Speedy intervention to AFS by Mike Sawyer brought about its immediate removal before any serious damage could occur.

On the wider logging scene, Spray Lakes Sawmills (based in Cochrane) has purchased the Cowley Forest Products timber licences and is currently planning to contract a Forest Management Agreement for their activities. This will be a first in this region of the Bow Crow Forest. It will put serious pressure on the forest resources of the Castle if it is accepted by the government.

### Sartoris Road

The CCWC's case for the Judicial Review of the Sartoris Road reconstruction came before the Federal Court in Calgary on December 6, 1999. Preliminary discussions made it clear that because the road was now already built, CCWC's arguments, regardless of their merits, would be considered moot. The judge made it clear that if we advanced our arguments it was likely that we would have costs awarded against us, even though it was established that the Municipal District of Pincher Creek

had acted in breach of the federal authorisation. Our lawyer withdrew our application for review.

### Screwdriver Creek Hearing

January 11 saw the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board in Pincher Creek for the Public Hearing into the five gas wells and pipeline applications by Shell and Canadian 88. In light of ongoing discussions with Shell over past and current industrial activities in the Castle, the CCWC Executive made the strategic decision not to debate its issues with Shell at this hearing. However, a general statement was read into the record, outlining our ongoing and increasing concerns regarding the state of the ecosystem and the negative effect that industrial activity has had.



Hikers in beargrass. Photo by Murray Anderson.

The AEUB's decision has just been released and holds no surprises in terms of the overall decision regarding the continued exploitation of the northeast corner of the Castle Crown for industrial activity. It does, however, contain a couple of paragraphs on cumulative impacts that specifically reflect the professional work that Mike Sawyer and Dr. Brian Horejsi, acting on behalf of Mike Judd, presented in their cross-examination of the proponents' expert panel. A couple of passages from the report serve to support CCWC's position regarding the cumulative impacts on the Castle Crown over time and our view of the inadequacy of the Integrated Resource Plan.

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**Upcoming Meetings**

The Annual General Meeting will be held in June. See separate announcement for details.

**Newsletter**

This newsletter welcomes comments and/or submissions from members and others. Please send submissions to the editor at the office or directly by e-mail (mmcragen@telusplanet.net). Please check with the editor 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 editor takes responsibility for articles, notices, etc., for which an author is not identified.

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



## Readers Write

In the newsletter of December 1999, there are many comments concerning Dr. Mead's letter and I have a bit to put forth. Dr. Mead had stated that "every major valley had roads and trails before Shell arrived." I agree that the Castle-Carbondale drainage had roads and trails, in which there was logging for lumber and mine props, but the Front Range canyons were not roaded.

I was an Assistant Ranger with the Castle Ranger Station and we were on range inspections in the Front Range canyons in 1952. We would drive to the last ranch on each valley drainage, get permission to cross their land, then we would walk up each valley into the Forest Reserve to check the range land. There were no roads, just game and cattle trails, so I would say Dr. Mead was in error with that statement.

Ainsley E. Gibson, Blairmore, Alberta

## AGM Camp-Out

Mark your calendars. The CCWC's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Syncline Group Campsite, along the Westcastle River on the weekend of June 17-18. This year is our Tenth Anniversary. Whether this is an occasion for celebration or despair, come and camp and enjoy the Castle in the spring.

The Business Meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon, after a potluck lunch. There will be guest speakers/presenters as well as a selection of guided interpretive hikes. Anyone willing to share their expertise please call Louise (at the office) or James at 403-628-2422. This notice will be followed up with a special AGM mail-out (maps, details of camping facilities etc. included) once our planning is completed.  
**See you there!**

## Slide Librarian Needed

Murray Anderson has decided to give someone else the opportunity to maintain the CCWC slide Library. We owe a Murray a big "thank you" for the hours he has put into being in just the right place to take spectacular photos. He also spent a lot of time developing a filing system. Each year he meticulously identified and filed the best of the year's photos so they are available when we need them for our slide shows and display, or to accompany media releases.

We need a volunteer with an interest in photography, who is willing to take or gather slides of the Castle and activities taking place there, to file them and to maintain the lending library. If interested, contact the office or James Tweedie (628 2422).



... *Winter*, continued from Page 1

The Board recognised that “it was possible or even likely that the biological thresholds for at least some key species identified as important in the IRP may now have been exceeded. This would appear to strongly suggest that the publicly available planning tools for the region may now be outdated and inadequate to address the current level of development.”

“the Board strongly believes that ... an updated integrated resource management strategy must be developed to confirm that the region’s environmental values are being adequately protected.”

The Board’s statement that it “intends to raise this issue with the appropriate land management agencies” seems a bit lame, given that the Board has been ruling on these issues for the past twenty years or so, and even attempted to set up the *Crown of the Continent Society* back in the ’80s to address them.

### Castle Mountain Resort

The MD decided to write off the \$227,000 that they were owed for their share in the Westcastle Development Authority’s final settling of accounts with CMR. And CMR is currently positioning themselves for their Phase 3 (and more) development planning and would like to “consult” with the CCWC membership. A representative from CMR will attend our Board meeting in Lethbridge, on March 25.



## GREEN—An Environmental Network

The GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network (GREEN Canada) is about providing everyday Canadians who love wildlands and wildlife with the skills they need to protect Canada’s natural wonders. The CCWC is signed up as a partner group with GREEN.

“GREEN Canada will develop a network of conservationists across the country, and will use its organizing system to help Canadians connect with decision makers about proposed federal endangered species legislation and other national issues,” says Stephen Legault, the group’s Executive Director.

Legault is spearheading the new project, and says that GREEN Canada will be a powerful new tool in the activist’s tool box. Legault says that in each of the country’s 301 federal provincial ridings, a network of concerned citizens will be mobilized and given tips on how to strategically target their MPs on conservation issues and improve their environmental campaigns. The backbone of the project is a database system that allows action alert messages to be tailored to each individual riding so that activists receive only the most useful information. The service will be provided free of charge to conservation groups and other concerned Canadians.

Meanwhile, thanks to the volunteer commitment of our members and the continuing faith and generosity of our funders, the CCWC is pushing forward with our campaign to secure future legislated protection for the Castle.

As we hit the ten year anniversary, I would like to acknowledge for our members the funding organisations that have helped us with our work this past year: Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Fund, Alberta Ecotrust, the EJLB Foundation, the Wilburforce Foundation, the Kendall Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund, Mr. Tom Campion of Zoomie’s Clothing, the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, and the Fanwood Foundation.

Our summer staffing needs were supported in part through the Alberta Summer Temporary Employment Program and the Government of Canada’s Summer Career Placement Program. We are currently seeking funding for two proposals that we would like to see carried out. The first priority is a habitat analysis for a grizzly bear recovery program in the Castle. The second will be a rare plants survey for the area. We also expect to have two extra staff employed during the summer to promote the Castle to a wider public and to assist Louise in the office with the organisation of our resource library.

See you at the AGM! •

GREEN Canada will begin its efforts to help mobilize Canadian activists by working on federal endangered species legislation. When it is capable, GREEN will take on other high-priority campaigns across Canada such as protecting national parks and international trade and the environment issues.

“Protecting transboundary wildlife issues are at the top of our priority list,” says Legault. “We’re very excited to provide our service to the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition so that that they can use it as one more way of protecting this incredible landscape, and all its wildlife.”

GREEN Canada is based on the highly successful model developed by Defenders of Wildlife in the United States. GREEN Canada will work closely with its US counterpart to ensure wildlife and wildlands that stretch across the US-Canada borders are protected.

For more information contact Stephen Legault, Executive Director of GREEN Canada at (403) 609-2509 or by e-mail at <greencan@agt.net> •



# The Castle Quiz

by Gordon Petersen

How well do you know the Castle? Take this quiz and find out.

1. The Castle is located:
  - a. Down south—somewhere.
  - b. In the Bow-Crow forest north of Waterton Lakes National Park and south of the Crowsnest Pass.
  - c. In a part of the province known for great scenery, cowboys, and high winds.
  - d. All of the above.
2. With an area of 1,040 square kilometres, the Castle:
  - a. Is clearly big enough for gas exploration, logging, extensive off-road vehicle use, and intensive recreational development to continue unabated.
  - b. Is smaller than the home range of a single male grizzly bear.
  - c. Is the size of Wyoming.
  - d. Would still be measured in square miles if it wasn't for that darned Trudeau.
3. The Castle was part of Waterton Lakes National Park (1914–21) and then a Provincial Game Preserve until 1954. Since the '50s:
  - a. More than 50 gas wells have been drilled in the area.
  - b. Much of the old-growth forest has been logged.
  - c. Motorized recreation has increased enormously.
  - d. Despite its problems, the Castle remains an area of outstanding natural features and remarkable scenic vistas.
  - e. All of the above.
4. The Front Range Canyons:
  - a. Are a type of open mountain landscape unique in Canada.
  - b. Are more scenic, and better for wildlife, with gas wells and service roads in them.
  - c. Funnel the strong southwesterly winds down them, resulting in a unusual set of ecological conditions.
  - d. Would be more useful if they were dammed and stocked with fish.
  - e. b & d
  - f. a & c
5. The Castle:
  - a. Has less biodiversity than Banff National Park.
  - b. Has the highest biodiversity in Alberta outside of Waterton Park.
  - c. Contains over 160 rare plant species.
  - d. b & c
  - e. Doesn't need so many useless species.
6. The Castle and the Flathead in southeastern B.C.:
  - a. Have no ecological connections between them.
  - b. Are best managed as two separate areas.
  - c. Together form a vital connecting link that allows for the movement of, especially, large carnivores like grizzlies and wolves up and down the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) chain.
  - d. Are where, again?
7. In 1993, after an exhaustive hearing into a proposed four-season resort development, the Alberta Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) recommended:
  - a. That 'anything goes' in the Castle because it already has some industrial impacts.
  - b. That the Castle be made a Wildland Recreation Area whether or not the resort development proceeded.
  - c. That the best economic use for the Castle would be to liquidate its forests as quickly as possible.
  - d. That the Castle be moved to Banff so more people could find it.
8. Castle Mountain Resort (formerly Westcastle) in the West Castle Valley:
  - a. Has great skiing in good snow years.
  - b. Is being developed 'a little bit at a time.'
  - c. Is changing from a community ski hill to a new town.
  - d. Acts as a plug in the West Castle Valley which is a major wildlife movement corridor.
  - e. Still poses all the environmental problems that were identified in the 1993 NRCB hearing.
  - f. All of the above
9. The Castle went through the Province's Special Places 2000 process. As a result:
  - a. Little has changed except the name.
  - b. The Castle's future is assured, and we can all breathe a sigh of relief.
  - c. Off-road vehicles in the Castle will be strictly controlled.
  - d. b & c (Would you be interested in some waterfront property in Florida?)
10. More information about the Castle can be obtained by:
  - a. Visiting the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition's (CCWC) websites at [and](#) .
  - b. Contacting the CCWC office (see p. 2) and requesting a brochure or other information.
  - c. Attending the CCWC's Annual General Meeting and Rendezvous June 17-18, 2000.
  - d. Coming along on one of the CCWC hikes into the Castle.
  - e. All of the above.

Answers:

1. d; 2. b; 3. e; 4. f; 5. d; 6. c; 7. b; 8. f; 9. a; 10. e

If you scored:

0: Just visiting this planet.

1-3: Go to question 10—quickly!

4-6: Not bad, but a trip to the Castle would be in order.

7-9: You've been doing your homework.

10: Dave Sheppard watch out!



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