



The Chorus Continues to Grow in Favour of the Andy Russell-I'tai Sah Kòp Park Proposal

by Gordon Petersen

As James Keelaghan says, the chorus continues to grow in favour of protecting the Castle as a park in memory of Andy and Kay Russell, and in respect of the Piikani First Nation. Keelaghan has joined Robert Bateman, Farley Mowat, Connie Kaldor, Dr. David Schindler, Sid Marty, Ian Tyson, Mike Robinson (Glenbow Alberta Institute), and The Right Honourable Joe Clark to urge Premier Klein and his government to protect the Castle as a combined Wildland and Provincial Park.

The issue was brought to the Legislature on November 16, 2005, with a statement presented by Mr. Harry Chase, who is the MLA for Calgary Varsity and the Liberal Critic for Parks and Protected Areas. Dianne Pachal of CCWC and the Sierra Club was introduced by her Conservative MLA, Mr Wayne Cao.

Mr. Chase's statement was recorded in the Hansard Blues (the unofficial record of the day—the official version is forthcoming):

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this House I would like to introduce the following guests who have travelled from across the province and the nation to support the Castle-Crown wilderness park initiative. I would ask the guests to please stand after their names have been called so that we can recognize them with the traditional greeting of this House: James Tweedie, conservation director, Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition; Judith Huntley, executive director; Joe Obad, conservation director, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Calgary-Banff chapter; Jill Sturdy, national outreach co-ordinator for CPAWS; Harvey Locke, national senior

conservation adviser for CPAWS; Meredith James of the Sierra Club of Canada; Selena Smith, a post-graduate student at the University of Alberta; Rebecca Reeves, parks watch co-ordinator for CPAWS, Edmonton chapter; George Newton of CPAWS and Federation of Alberta Naturalists. Please, can we give them a round of applause? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Castle Wilderness

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On June 1, 2005, an Alberta legend passed on, and I rise today to urge the

government to designate the Castle wilderness as a wild-land provincial park in the legacy of Andy Russell. This wilderness area just north of Waterton Lakes national park is a sublime landscape of virtually unparalleled natural diversity, home to nearly half of Alberta's plant species and a full complement of large carnivores.

Protecting the area's three underrepresented ecoregions—the montane, the foothills fescue grasslands, and



Andy Russell (left, in 1959) was the first person to film Canadian grizzlies in the wild. Kay Russell (right, undated) takes in the view at Kintla. Photographs used with permission of the Russell family.

the foothills aspen parkland—will help make this the corner piece completing the province's conservation puzzle. It will contribute to the Yellowstone to Yukon initiative, an international compendium of over 800 conservation groups committed to creating a 3,200 kilometre long protected area network from Yellowstone national park to the Peel River in the Yukon Territory. The opportunities for outdoor recreation and sustainable tourism make this area a Kananaskis south, an economic and social asset to the region.

see Andy on page 2 ...



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Upcoming Meeting

Members are welcome to attend board meetings. Please contact the office if you wish to be notified.

Newsletter

Editor: Judy Huntley.
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.

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and greatly appreciated.*

Staff Activities

by Judy Huntley

It has been a busy, busy quarter. James and/or I took part in over 30 outreach activities between September 20 and November 16, supported at some by other members. The spectrum encompassed speaking engagements, open houses, government and legal consultation, fieldwork with Shell, watershed and forest protection meetings, and coordination with other conservation societies and native groups. •

... *Andy*, continued from page 1

I can think of no better centennial tribute than to designate the Castle wilderness as Andy Russell I'tai Sah Kòp wild-land park. I'tai Sah Kòp references the name used for the area by the Piikani First Nation, who first called this wilderness area home.

Andy Russell was an outstanding Albertan who embodies the spirit of Alberta's heritage. Just some of Andy's accomplishments include being an Order of Canada recipient, the author of 13 books and dozens of magazine articles, and receiving three honorary doctorate of law degrees. Andy travelled extensively on horseback throughout the Rocky Mountains and the foothills, becoming a wilderness advocate as he watched these special places begin to disappear through shortsighted industrial development. Our Premier spoke fondly of Andy's contributions to Alberta at the memorial service for Andy this summer.

Alberta would benefit from remembering people like Andy Russell, respecting the original First Nations inhabitants, and protecting more places like the Castle wilderness. I urge all members of the House to support the creation of the Andy Russell I'tai Sah Kòp wild-land provincial park as a legacy for future Albertans to enjoy. Thank you.

By all accounts, the statement was warmly received in the house. If you haven't already done so, **now** would be a good time to add your voice to the chorus. Please send your letter (letters or faxes have far more impact than e-mails) to Premier Ralph Klein, fax (780) 427 1349, or mail to Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5K 2B6. If a resident of the Livingstone-MacLeod constituency, please also write to the Hon. David Coumts, fax (403) 553 2133, or by mail to P.O. Box 69, Ft. MacLeod, AB T0L 0Z0.

For more information about the Andy Russell-I'tai Sah Kòp Park proposal, including a copy of the latest flyer, please see our website at <www.ccwc.ab.ca>, or check out the websites of CPAW's <www.castlewilderness.ca>, and Centennial Wilds <www.centennialwilds.ab.ca>. •

Thanks!

To all the members (and their friends and acquaintances) who have written letters in support of the Andy Russell - I'tai sah kop Wildland Park,

To all our financial supporters, our generous members and supporting organizations Fanwood, Wilburforce, LaSalle Adams, Tides, and World Wildlife Foundations,

To our many volunteers, in the office, in the field, producing and sending the newsletter, and at meetings,

To our strategic partners and hardworking Board of Directors

Thanks! Many, many thanks.



Communications/Outreach Planning

by Gordon Petersen

The CCWC board has identified communication/outreach as an area that we should be spending more time and energy on.

While it is perhaps inevitable that our message may be both misunderstood and, at times, deliberately misrepresented by those who don't share our views, we need to continue to work hard to get accurate information out.

A couple of recent examples brought this home to me. At a meeting of the C5 Crowpac Committee where James had just given a very strong presentation, and was responding to questions, one of the committee members commented, regarding the Natural Resources Conservation Board's (NRCB) 1993 decision (and I'm paraphrasing), "you guys would have been happy with that because it would have shut the whole area down." Obviously, there was nothing in the NRCB decision that would have "shut the whole area down."

At a more recent meeting with several directors from Castle Mountain Resort (CMR), I was surprised to hear that there was a belief that the CCWC wanted to (again I'm paraphrasing), "shut CMR down." And this, despite the fact that we have publicly stated, for example, "We accept, and

many of our members support, the presence of a viable local ski hill" (www.cwc.ab.ca/ccwcbref/PressReleases.html/PincherCreekEchoDec1301.html).

Despite these, and other cases where our message has been misunderstood or misrepresented, it has been heartening to see the increasing number of people who have been coming out on our summer hikes. These folks seem to be getting the positive message that the Castle is a great place for people, and that it's an area worth protecting.

As part of the process of improving our communications and outreach, Michelle has been leading us through a fairly formal communications planning process. To help with that process, we'd like to hear from you. Do you know of examples where our message has been distorted or misrepresented? Are there cases where our message is really getting across? Do you have ideas or recommendations that would help us develop the plan? If so, please let us know.

Finally, if you do hear CCWC's message being misunderstood or misrepresented, please make the effort to set the record straight. The job of protecting the Castle will be made much easier if we can dispel the myths. •



Judicial Review Appeal Decision Unfavourable

by Gordon Petersen

The Court of Appeal's decision regarding the Judicial Review of Alberta Environment's decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of Castle Mountain Resort's (CMR's) expansion plans was released on September 9, 2005. The decision is available at www.albertacourts.ab.ca/jdb/2003-/ca/civil/2005/2005abca0283.pdf.

We are disappointed that the Court of Appeal overturned Madame Justice Kenny's decision at the Court of Queen's Bench who found the decision to approve the real estate and ski terrain development at CMR without an EIA "patently unreasonable," and ordered the Environment Department to reconsider its decision in accordance with the legislation.

Even though the Court of Appeal found against us, there are some positive aspects to the judgement. To begin with, the Court described the Castle as "an environmentally sensitive area." We couldn't agree more.

Secondly, the Court of Appeal judges apparently accepted the government's assertion that regulatory processes other than an EIA were capable of predicting and managing the impacts of the development. Our Conservation Director, James Tweedie, spoke to this issue during his October 5th

presentation to the C5 Crowpac Meeting in Blairmore (see www.cwc.ab.ca/ccwcbref/ReportsandDocs.html/C5CrowpacPresentation.html):

In closing their arguments that the Director's decision not to order an EIA was reasonable, the Court of Appeal Judges rely heavily on the fact that the Director was entitled to believe the assurances made by the Deputy Minister for SRD that "wildlife impacts and overall land use in the region can be effectively managed and protected by processes under the Public Lands Act. This may include conditioning the Licence of Occupation issued to CMR, as well as, further consultation this spring among various stakeholders during the review of the C5 Forest Management Unit" (Memo from Deputy Minister, AENV, to Deputy Minister, SRD, April 9, 2002).

The burden therefore falls upon the C5 Management process, together with the AENV's water approvals process and SRD's Public Lands administration, to deliver on the whole suite of issues raised by the Director: the need for public involvement, the need to address cumulative effects at a regional scale as well as implementing the mitigation measures identified by the Director, which include, as the Court of Appeal Judges note, in

see Decision on page 4 ...



Sustainable Forests?

New 20 year Forest Plan lays road map for full-scale assault on remaining natural forests along the East Slopes of the Rockies.

by James Tweedie

In late October, Alberta Sustainable Resources Development (ASRD) released its Draft Forest Management Plan for the C5 Forest Management Unit (FMU) that will determine the fate of the landscape between Waterton Lakes National Park and Kananaskis Country over the next 20 years. Claiming to be based on the Requirements and Guidance document of the Canadian Standards Association's 2002 Sustainable Forest Management Standard (SFM) that sets priorities for the future sustainability of Canadian forests, the C5 Plan falls far short. It embraces the rhetoric and the format of the CSA SFM to disguise its real intent to set out the timber allocation process for ensuring feedstock to the Cochrane mill of Spray Lakes Sawmills, which now holds 87 per cent of the annual allowable cut in the C5 FMU.

The most serious substantive flaw in the Plan relates to its failure to anticipate future protected areas designations in the C5 FMU, and in the Castle particularly. This is achieved by a distortion of past and current information, policy and planning initiatives, including the Government's Special Places 2000 program, and a total disregard for the Minister of Environment's evidence in recent Court proceedings to address environmental concerns in the Castle through the C5 process (see Judicial Review article on page 3).

Recommendations in *A Living Document* state that the Castle Special Management Area and/or the Zone I and Zone 2 lands in the planning area should be legislated to provide the Castle ecosystem with a higher level of protection than currently

... *Decision, continued from page 3*

paragraph 63 of their Decision, the concerns raised through the 1993 EIA and Hearing before the NRCB, which, they state "are not so dated as to lose all relevance." (para 63, p 20, CCWC v. Alberta, 2005 ABCA 283.)

In other words, the Court accepted the government's argument that things like the need for public involvement, dealing with cumulative effects and mitigation measures, and other issues raised in the 1993 Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) hearings could and would be dealt with through existing processes. Now it's up to us to insist that the government lives up to its rhetoric, and the expectations of the court, and actually deals with these issues, instead of doing its best to avoid them. In itself, that is a significant gain.

If we were to decide to try and Appeal the Alberta Court of Appeal's ruling, the next court would be the Supreme Court of Canada. That would obviously be a very substantial undertaking and one for which we did not, unfortunately, have the funds. •

exists. Existing options for legislating the CSMA were seen to be unsatisfactory by the Local Committee when it presented its recommendations to the Minister of the Environment in 1997. New designation alternatives, to be identified in new protected areas legislation, could be Applied to the CSMA in the future (pp. 27/28. Revised Castle River Sub-Regional IRP)

With only 94 hectares of the 1000 sq. km. CSMA under Protected Areas designation for one particular ecosystem complex, the Westcastle River Wetlands, the Plan fails to meet the most basic of the CSA SFM guidelines for the Conservation of Biodiversity identified in *Element 1.4: Protected Areas and Sites of Biological Significance*. This undermines any credibility the Plan may have for achieving the sustainable forest criteria set out under CSA SFM—far less the Forest Stewardship Certification—standards, and significantly skews the modeling results of the Timber Supply Analysis and the Spatial Harvest Sequence mapping.

This 20-year timber allocation plan will come into effect in May 2006. The FMP will be the only coordinated, orchestrated and sufficiently resourced plan for activities on this landscape. Decisions made for the active forest land base, driven by explicitly commercial forestry interests and often exempt from further public scrutiny or review, will preempt all other options. The only saving grace that we can look to is that the South and West Castle areas are not being targeted in the next 10 years. •



Fine End to Hiking Season

by James Tweedie

Two excellent hikes in the last half of September finished the 2005 season. For the finale, a multi-generation group trekked energetically past South Forth Lakes to Barnaby Ridge on a beautiful—indeed stunning—fall day. From the top they looked across the South Castle to Castle Mountain on one side, and over the ski hill on the other. The week before, a somewhat less energetic hike was a grand day for observing birds as well as travelling quite high and far on Vicki Ridge. After the hike, we celebrated the fine season with a barbeque at the gazebo in Beaver Mines.

Doug and Teresa Dolman kept a list of birds seen or heard during the hike, and counted over 18 species. They said "It was a great day to be out hiking and we both enjoyed it very much. We were particularly excited about the number of Broad-winged Hawks which we have found before only in ones or twos anywhere in Southern Alberta. Thanks for leading the hike. Cheers!" •