

Stewardship — it's important

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

Can we sign you up? The Steward's program has been a regular CCWC activity for 15 years now. Some of our Stewards have moved away, and others are no longer able to get out to their favourite area. We hope to add you to the list!

When you sit beside a stream or alpine lake you may be delighted by the butterflies and dragonflies whose home you briefly share. But do you know which of them are rare or endangered, and do you know who to tell, and what they need to know? Did you spot a frog or salamander? If so, did you carefully photograph it and note your location, and then make sure that both CCWC and the Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program have the information?

There are lots of birds whose security is changing with human intrusion, their habitat shrinking or spreading because of climate change. For instance, the Clark's nutcracker depends on the seeds of declining species such as limber pine and whitebark pine. The loss of these trees may cause nutcracker population declines. If you are stewarding the same area each year, you can provide valuable information about this friendly bird. Then there's the nighthawk, the one with the evening "beep" that eats gallons of mosquitoes. When did you hear one last? Maybe in your favourite Castle camping spot. Have you paid attention? Would you recognize a brown creeper? Or a broad winged hawk? Did you know that both the Great Blue Heron and the Great Grey Owl are listed as Sensitive?



Corin Lohmann

Can anyone identify this moth, seen on a stewardship hike?

John and Kathleen Hancock pay attention to spiders, and have not only found new species, but have learned important "micro-ecology" that nobody was previously recording. Would you notice if you crossed the trail of an otter? We know they're getting closer. You might be the first to record one in your area. It's time to get out — hit the trail — and pay attention.

What knowledge would help you be a more effective steward? Let us know, and we'll try to find it and provide it. And sign up to record conditions in your favourite place each year, or on each of your trips into the Castle Wilderness. •



May hikes planned

See page 3.

(Left) Castle Mountain from Table Mountain.



CASTLE-CROWN WILDERNESS COALITION

Box 2621, Pincher Creek, Alberta T0K 1W0
Telephone 403 627 5059
e-mail: office@ccwc.ab.ca
website: www.ccwc.ab.ca

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Staff

Judy Huntley, Executive Director
(address/phone/e-mail as above)

James Tweedie, Conservation Director
403 628 2422
e-mail: tweedie@telusplanet.net

Upcoming Meeting

Members are welcome to attend board meetings. The next board meeting will be on March 10, in Calgary, starting at 10:30. Please let us know if you'd like to attend, so we can book the appropriate venue.

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.

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

*Thanks to all of you who sent extra donations
in the last while.*

Coalition Changes

CCWC sends our stalwart president **Gordon Petersen** off on a year's journey to some of the world's fascinating places. He'll be teaching English in Laos and possibly in western China, and travelling to Antarctica. We will miss his skills and determination, but we wish him well and look forward to great stories and photographs.

Our current Treasurer, **Jillian Lynn Lawson**, will become interim President. Jillian lives in the Porcupine Hills and has been, among many other things, a lighthouse keeper and a student of some of Canada's northernmost grizzlies, near the Arctic Circle in the Yukon. She loves wild places and works hard for them.

Corin Lohmann has moved on to train British soldiers in cross country skiing and winter backcountry survival. Thanks, Corin, for your work for CCWC.

James Tweedie is back after several months on another project. Thanks, James, we're very glad to have you back.

Staff wanted

We will need a new staff person to do outreach from late spring to fall of this year. Tasks will include enhancing the Stewardship Program and being in charge of major displays at folk festivals and other venues. Interested? Contact Judy at office@ccwc.ab.ca or 403 627 5059.

Volunteers needed

CCWC would like to add to our list of volunteers. If you are a keen hiker, you could add a notebook to your pack, and record your observations to add to our data collection. Or if you're a festival-goer, you could help spread the word about the Castle Wilderness and the Andy Russell - I'tai Sah Kop Park proposal. Get in touch: office@ccwc.ab.ca or 403 627 5059.

Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendars for Saturday May 12, at the Lebel Mansion in Pincher Creek, starting at 10:30.

Keynote presentation: Mountain pine beetles and their ecological implications.

A short hike after the meeting will be planned according to weather conditions.

Please consider joining the Board of Directors.



Mountain Pine Beetle

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

The sudden spread of this native species is an important example of situations that people will have to deal with as the climate changes. Waterton is one area where previous outbreaks were left to complete themselves naturally, with interesting ecological results. We have invited Cyndi Smith of Parks Canada to discuss this at CCWC's AGM.

She has recently sent the following paper.

“Ecological Role of the Mountain Pine Beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae* Hopkins) in Forest Types of the Rocky Mountain National Parks, Canada”, prepared for Cyndi Smith, WLNP, in June 2004 by Pamela Dykstra et al.

Executive Summary

“The mountain pine beetle ... (MPB) ... has a pervasive influence on montane, lodgepole landscapes in the interior of British Columbia.... (T)he ecology, behaviour, and population dynamics of MPB is the focus for much research ... (but) the ecological role of the beetle—the interaction of MPB with the biotic and abiotic elements of its environment—is not equally studied MPB influence structure, process, and function in ecosystems. The beetle increases the heterogeneity of stands and landscapes. (It) interacts with other disturbance agents to



Susan Guerra

Pines on the Table Mountain hike.

create diverse pathways of stand development. This diversity creates unique biological legacies and post-disturbance assemblages of species. The beetle stimulates productivity and causes re-distribution of resources within stands. MPB has a direct role in many species interactions, primarily as a prey in many predator-prey relationships. We synthesize the literature ...” •



First 2007 Hikes

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

Patricia Wagenaar will again lead the early hikes, wonderful for birds and flowers, to Tapay Hill on May 16 (a Wednesday), and Antelope Butte on May 19.

See the website for full hiking details when they are all assembled. The schedule will also be included in the May newsletter. •



Susan Guerra

Scenes from the Table Mountain hike, 2006.



Ski trips

So far there was only one trip, and at that time, ski conditions were not good. Unfortunately Corin is no longer working on this, but contact the office if you are still keen, and keep an eye on the website in case more outings are planned.

One of our avid skiers, Tim Grier, took this photo of the Syncline Brook (below) in the third week of February. He also photographed the dipper's nest (right) — a beautiful construction usually concealed behind falling water.



Tim Grier

Communication with the new government

If you haven't done so already - or even if you have—this would be a fine time to write our new Ministers about either the C5 Forest Management Plan, or the Andy Russell - I'tah Sah Kop Park proposal. Additional information is available on the website, or you can give the office a call or drop us a line.

Planned additions/improvements to the Website

CCWC's slogan is: The Castle Wilderness: protect it—enjoy it. Our website has tended to focus primarily on our advocacy work. This spring and summer we plan to add sections that



Tim Grier

highlight the other focus areas of CCWC's activities. First, we want a photo gallery to show the beauty of the landscape and the pleasure our members experience in it. Second will be a map of the Castle Wilderness that enables us to post Stewards' observations over time and in place, making the information they provide (such as wildlife and plant information, whether human impacts are getting worse or better, changes in the forest cover, whether restoration activities have been undertaken and whether or not they have been successful) readily available.

Sheep poaching

On two occasions this winter bighorn sheep, a total of three rams and two ewes, were shot in the Front Range canyons. The rams' heads and capes were taken; the ewes were simply slaughtered.

Barenaked Ladies

Sierra Club of Canada (SCC) was one of the national environmental groups invited by the Barenaked Ladies band to have a display in the Eco Village space at the concerts in their cross-Canada tour. The proposed Andy Russell-I'tai sah kop Park was a feature of the SCC display for the Calgary and Lethbridge concerts where volunteers talked to people interested in the park initiative and provided them with the pamphlet. Thanks, BNL! •