



Vol. 19, No. 3, September 2009

## **Busy Summer in the Castle**

*by Staff and Volunteers*

We've had another summer of great work and wonderful hiking. It's not possible to thank either the staff or the volunteers enough. 2009 has been a very busy year for hiking, and some hikes have attracted a number of non-members. We've been asked to consider whether CCWC should reconsider our policy on this, and to ask those of you who hike, or have considered joining CCWC hikes, whether our pre-hike planning is good enough. Did you get enough information to be properly prepared for the conditions? Do you think the group size should be limited? Please contact me with your thoughts about hikes: Judy at [office@ccwc.ab.ca](mailto:office@ccwc.ab.ca) or 403 627 5059.

Our funding this year was much less than usual, which has been true for many voluntary organizations. It appears that government departments are seeing their budgets reduced, which means that organizations like CCWC will feel ever more urgency to reduce ecological damage and to share what we know. Please, if you can help with fundraising, get in touch.

I'd be pleased to give you a long report on the work we've done, but instead, I'll let Alice, Bree, Wendy and James speak for themselves, and I'll just say again that they are wonderful staff.

—Judy Huntley, Executive Director

### **Bree Korobanik— Highlights of Summer Work**

In May, I did a SWAT Presentation in the Crowsnest Pass, did planning and research to be ready to fulfill commitments to our summer grantors, provided information for a major article on Species at Risk in the Boundary, provided support for the CCWC AGM, helped with a Bird Count at Beauvais Lake with Crowsnest Conservation Society, and prepared a project for the Ed Gregor Day.

In June, Judy and I did Negotiations training in Calgary, I met with George Bloom of SRD to coordinate our weed work, attended the Alberta Stewardship Network AGM in Fort McLeod, and drove Judy through areas in the Castle where we discovered a new weed species: henbane.

In July, I organized a field trip with educators up Carbondale/ Castle Falls. Wendy, Alice and I finished the Table Mountain trail reclamation, revamped the small display, and created an interactive game for SCF Bear Aware which is Really Good!! It was used at the CCWC booth at the South Country Fair, and later at the Canmore Folk Fest. I participated in a Northern Leopard Frog count, pulled weeds, participated in the Knapweed Rodeo in WLNP, and organized the second annual WCWER weed pull.

I made Stewardship Observations of Mt. Backus, WCWER, Carbondale/Lynx Creek, and the West and South Castle, as well as doing lots of emailing/ phoning

In August, I set up and staffed the CCWC booth at the Canmore Folk Fest, organized a Species at Risk night at the Lebel, led an overnight hike to Rainy Lake, participated in a MULTISAR Harlequin Duck Survey for 2 days, helped Sherri and students from Lethbridge with their overnight at Beaver Mines Lake, pulled weeds in the South Castle, and wrote reports.

### **Wendy Ryan— Stewardship and Outreach Report June /July**

I hosted the 'Otesha' youth sustainability cycling group for 3 days in Pincher Creek. Thanks to the many volunteers who provided housing and events. I set up and staffed Earth Day display in the mall. We arranged projects for the Ed Gregor Stewardship Day. It snowed, so Bree, Alice Main and I completed the work on July 7th.

I led hikes to Mt Backus, South Fork Lakes for CPAWS staff and Paul Karchuk of CBC radio, Ruby & Grizzly Lake back pack overnight trip, and Prairie Bluff, and helped on hikes to Big Sage, Carbondale Fire Look-out, and McCarty Lake. I also did stewardship trips to Castle Mt tarn, Lys Lake and Blue Lake

I pulled and dug weeds in the West Castle Valley (along the road), in the Ecological Reserve, and at Beaver Mines Lake as well as at the old outfitter's camp in the South Castle and at the Font Creek/South Castle confluence for knapweed.

*continued on Page 3 ...*

Box 2621, Pincher Creek, Alberta T0K 1W0  
Telephone 403 627 5059  
e-mail: [office@ccwc.ab.ca](mailto:office@ccwc.ab.ca)  
website: [www.ccwc.ab.ca](http://www.ccwc.ab.ca)

#### **CCWC Board of Directors**

Gordon Petersen (Beaver Mines)	President
Mike Lynch (Calgary)	Vice President
Gordon Petersen (Beaver Mines)	Treasurer
Mari Decker (Calgary)	Secretary
Jim Cameron (Pincher Creek)	Director
Dianne Pachal (Calgary)	Director
Charlie Russell (Twin Butte)	Director
Nancy Tripp (Pincher Creek)	Director
Jeff Emmett (Calgary)	Director at large
Jillian Lynn Lawson (Cowley)	Director at large
Peter Lee (Edmonton)	Director at large
Michelle Spencer (Pincher Creek)	Director at large

#### **Staff**

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

James Tweedie, Conservation Director  
[jtweedie@xplornet.com](mailto:jtweedie@xplornet.com) 403 628 2422

#### **Upcoming Meeting**

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

#### **Membership**

Note the CanadaHelps button on the website for donations by credit card—and thanks to those who have used it already!

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



## **Coalition News**

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

#### **Celebration!**

An end of season celebration/20th anniversary party is being planned for the last Saturday in November. If you'd like to host it or help organize it, please contact Judy or Wendy at the office. Please save the date. An RSVP would be appreciated.

#### **Wetland Signage (by Wendy Ryan)**

CCWC is the registered steward of the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve in the West Castle Valley.

We send a special thank you to **Janine Lemire**, Conservation Officer for Alberta Parks for organizing a field day in the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve to put up boundary and 'No Hunting No Fishing' signs. James Tweedie and Wendy Ryan assisted in putting in T posts, and attaching signs. We repaired the north drift fence and garbage and a wooden structure were picked up. We walked the outside boundary and put up new signs. A few had to be replaced due to age and vandalism, which totaled 20 new. •



## **Thanks**

All of us at CCWC warmly thank our new and old volunteers, our contributors of time, gear, skills, and money, and our funders. Particular thanks go out to our very hard-working weed crew and to our hike leaders, who give their time and share their knowledge. We had the great treat of a Grade 11 volunteer, **Alice Main**, who gave us many days of hard work over the summer, and of a supporter who donated a very generous financial gift that provided both travel money and an honorarium.

Many thanks to our funders: **RBC Blue Water, the Community Spirit Fund, Fanwood and Wilburforce Foundations, The LaSalle Adams Fund, Ecotrust, and the Alberta Conservation Association**, which has been very generous this year in supporting the expansion of our field work to include observation of Species at Risk, and the MD of Pincher Creek contributed to the weed work.

Those of you who are able to contribute money have had your 2008 donations matched by the Community Spirit program, and we hope and expect this will happen again this year.

Thanks to CPAWS staff for including Wendy on a hike taking Paul Karchut of CBC radio to South Fork Lakes. You can see (and hear) his piece at <http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/features/recreation/#>. You sounded great, Wendy! •



## Summer Activities

... continued from Page 1

I did outreach with SRD and Alberta Parks staff, and at Camp Impeesa; at the AGM for Alberta Stewardship Network in Fort Macleod, and via a Table Mt hiking guide. I did work with the northern leopard frog at Beauvais Lake and harlequin ducks in Lost Ck, and presented a Castle Special Places update to the MD of PC council and to the Town Council of PC.

I attended the Waterton Lakes National Park Butterfly Count, the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve Weed Pull, and did special outreach to Castle Mountain Resort community association, mentoring them to hold their own weed pull. I organized the 'Bear and Cougar Aware Evening' with Charlie Russell on July 16.

My main focus when out working and hiking in the field is to:

- Educate and dialogue with our guests
- Maintain and restore trails & campsites
- Pick up garbage and pack it out
- Journal my findings and record wildflowers, animal tracks, scat, wildlife, ORV use/abuse, cattle grazing
- Locate and pull invasive plants.

### Alice Main—My summer with Castle Crown

If I had to describe in two words my volunteering experience with CCWC, they would have to be *discovery* and *difference*. *Discovery* because I learned so much from the staff about how they run, what they do and what could be done to help the Castle Wilderness area. I also learned about the religious sites and geographical wonders in the area. I also discovered how we monitor threatened species, such as harlequin ducks.

*Difference* because it seemed like everything that we did, worked toward leaving the land in better shape than we found it. We tried to prevent hikers from becoming strayed and decrease the impact that motor vehicles have on the environment. It is sad that so many people have such little regard for the environment, but it was nice to work with people who really believed they could make the world a better place.

My first few volunteer days included the table mountain trail restoration and weed picking. I would talk about the trail restoration and how it helped protect the local habitats and kept the mountain shale from eroding, but I would much rather talk about WEEDS! I believe that I, with the coaching of Wendy, have become an avid weed picker. Now that I am acquainted with several weeds such as mullein, blue weed, knapweed, goat's beard, stick seed, and Canada thistle, I can tell you how to identify and eradicate them in my sleep. I have since been caught by strangers twice pulling mullein that just happened to run across my path and have received odd looks. But I guarantee you it is worth every odd look because you get the satisfaction of seeing your hard work pay off.

I would really like to thank Wendy, Bree, James and Judy for their kindness and teachings. It was definitely a positive experience volunteering for Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition and I would encourage anyone who wants to learn about and help the environment to volunteer too.

### James Tweedie—Backcountry Stewardship Hike, July 2009

On Friday July 17, as part of the CCWC's scheduled summer hiking program, I and a partner hiked an alternative route to the Table Mtn-Gladstone Valley divide, avoiding the heavily used summit route, and on into the northwest headwall basin of Gladstone. This route could well be a preferred one for future hikes onto Whistler Ridge and associated hiking of the high country between Table Mtn and the South Castle, to minimize at least the CCWC's impacts on one of the Piikani's spiritual sites.

On Saturday July 18, as part of the CCWC's Grizzly Lake hike, I joined the overnight camp at Ruby Lake, and from that camp hiked a high country route over the next few days over into the top of Scarpe Creek, onto the La Culotte Ridge, and then hooking into the high ridges pack trail around the top of Jutland Creek (mostly on the BC Sage Creek side) over to Font Mtn, and then to Sage Pass, briefly into WLNP by way of the Lost Lake trail to get back up onto Avion Ridge, and then across to the head of Yarrow and out on the following Wednesday afternoon.

The take home message of the few days on the trail is that there is still a fantastic tract of backcountry that is extremely little used, even by horses, although there were signs that some stalwart mountain bike enthusiast had managed to push, or occasionally pedal, his or her way from Sage Creek, on the BC side, into the Font Meadow. Sadly, illegal quads have again been making it up to the Divide from the lower Font Creek via the old logging roads.

From the ridges that overlook the trails that run from the South Castle into the high drainages, illegal quad trails were visible reaching like tentacles into all the high basins, despite the various gates, rocks and berms that have been placed by Alberta SRD and Shell Canada to attempt to control the access in the valley floor, and it's clear (from stray parts and debris) that skidoos are still going over into Waterton Park in winter.

As part of the CCWC's monitoring of Species at Risk in the Castle, the Conservation Director and other CCWC Summer Field Staff continue to record significant observations of flora and fauna on an anecdotal basis, providing the organization and other interested agencies with an ongoing record of the rich biodiversity of the Castle Wilderness. •



# CCWC Objects to Shell's Plans at Mt Backus and Castle River

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

## Extracts from our letters of objection

"In filing this Letter of Objection, the CCWC is representing the interests of its membership broadly as well as the interests of particular members who own property in, or close to, the Hamlet of Beaver Mines."

"The CCWC has been engaged in discussions with Shell Canada Ltd regarding their various operations, activities and specific facility applications for over a decade. With respect to the present Shell Castle River Applications our organization has made its opposition to the continuing industrialization of this Screwdriver Creek area to staff in Shell, and to the EUB/ERCB, since before the Screwdriver Creek Hearing in 2000. Following that Hearing, the EUB, in its Decision Report 2000-17, suggested the need for clearer planning direction

for the area: 'In order that future energy development in the region continues to be environmentally acceptable, the Board strongly believes additional evidence, such as would be found in an updated integrated resource management strategy, must be developed to confirm that the region's environmental values are being adequately protected'. [S]uch an Updated Castle River Sub-Regional IRP was indeed drafted in 2001,... [and] suggests the need for greater protective measures for the area, including possible legislative changes for parts of the region." [It was never adopted.]

"... CCWC ... will continue to raise our concerns that speak to the increasing cumulative effects of the industrial footprint of Shell's activities that have strongly negative and environmentally degrading effects on the surrounding public lands in the Screwdriver Creek, Kylllo Hill and Mt. Backus area."•



## Area News

### Castle Special Place

The Fair issue of the *Pincher Creek Echo*, perhaps the most widely-read issue of the year, had an article on Wendy's update on Castle Special Place to Town Council which featured the support from First Nations, including two photos of elder Margaret Plain Eagle. There was also a piece on the CSP process generally, and the editorial ("Castle Worth Protecting").

A two day horse-assisted hike has been arranged to give decision-makers an opportunity to see the Castle area first-hand, and to explore it with people who care for it. The Hon Mrs Ady, Alberta Parks Minister, a Lethbridge City Councillor, and other dignitaries are expected.

### Bear and Cougar Aware Presentation '09

— Wendy Ryan

Living and recreating in the foothills and mountains of this area, the CCWC presented the 3rd annual awareness event in Pincher Creek July 16th. Charlie Russell, our local renowned author and filmmaker spoke on bear and human co-existence. He gave a unique presentation on bear and cougar safety, covering the basics for living and traveling through wildlife habitat.

Wendy Ryan was a co-presenter and spoke on some keys to safe travel in the back country:

- Always carry bear spray, on your hip or easily assessable location. Make sure it has a safety cap and a string or cord attached in case it was to come off. Never store bear spray in a hot car. Know the proper use of it.
- Travel with several people if possible or make yourself known when going through bear and cougar habitat.
- Leave your dog at home or, at least, have it on a leash.

by Judy Huntley, Executive Director

After the presentation the audience was invited to share their stories and adventures with bears and cougars.

### Shoreline Clean-up

The Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up will be the week of Sept 19-27th. Wendy will be organizing CCWC's contribution, at Beaver Mines Lake. At other times she will arrange weed pulls in the Wetlands and at other places. If you can help, please contact her at [wendydav@shaw.ca](mailto:wendydav@shaw.ca) or 403 627 4106.

### For Flower Aficionados

— Submitted by Tim Grier from the ACC e-newsletter,

To follow is a link to photographs of wildflowers of the Canadian Rockies and nearby foothills, prairies, and the Waterton-Glacier area. The plants are indexed according to scientific, common, and family names. Visit the website at <https://admin.alpineclubofcanada.ca/link/to/1633-17933-15-02> •



Alberta Parks

Participants in the West Castle Wetlands Ecological Reserve weed pull. Thanks to workers from CCWC, Parks Canada, Waterton Lakes National Park, the MD of Pincher Creek, and CMR residents