BOW VALLEY NATURALISTS

NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2004

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PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Wed., January 28 7:30 pm.

Along the Kootenay Trail: Early Travel in the Yoho Valley and Surrounding Area with Emerson Sanford .
Location: Banff Seniors Centre.

Wed., February 25 7:30 pm.

Birds and Burns: Effects of Management Practices on Bird Populations in Banff National Park with Brian Chruszcz.
and
Birds of Brazil with Shelley Mardiros.
Location: Banff Seniors Centre.

NOTE. February 25 is the evening of our Annual General Meeting and elections. Heather Dempsey has agreed to act as nominating committee. Anyone interested in participating on the Board of Directors should contact Heather (762-3056) before mid-February, or any member of the Board.

REMINDER!

Memberships are now due.

Our financial year is the calendar year. Memberships, still at a low cost of $5.00 are now due for year 2004.

Wed., March 24 7:30 pm.

Brown Bear Conservation in Kamchatka: Working and Living Amongst Bears in the Russian Far East with John Paczkowski.
Location: Banff Seniors Centre.

Wed., April 28 7:30 pm.

Monitoring Sound: the Forgotten Dimension with Dr. John Woods
Location: Banff Seniors Centre.

Annual Great Backyard Bird Count: February 13 - 16, 2004

from Bird Source

The purpose of the Annual Great Backyard Bird Count is to build a continent-wide index to help researchers keep tabs on the distribution and abundance of bird populations over time.

During last February's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), bird enthusiasts across North America submitted almost 50,000 checklists totaling more than four million birds. The event, which documented the whereabouts of 512 species, showed a regional decline of at least one of those species that may be the result of West Nile virus. American Crows were reported in alarmingly fewer numbers in Illinois and Ohio, where West Nile virus has had a strong presence. This decrease may or may not be related to West Nile, but the situation is certainly something we need to pay attention to. Since crows seem to be particularly vulnerable to the virus, we must carefully watch population trends reflected in future GBBCs and other citizen science counts.

The GBBC was developed to help monitor the abundance and distribution of birds in late winter, helping researchers spot alarming trends before situations become critical. As we see rapid changes in our environment, like the spread of West Nile virus and shifts in species' ranges, bird monitoring projects such as the Great Backyard Bird Count become increasingly important.

Participants will be able to submit additional observations to our latest online monitoring tool, eBird. eBird lets birders submit their sightings over the Internet to a vast database anytime, anywhere. They can create their own pull-down menu of their favorite birding locales by plotting their location on a map. Consider registering your site and counting for the conservation of birds on a daily or weekly basis. For more info. go to www.birdsource.org.

2003 Christmas Bird Counts

by *Mike McIvor*

This will be a year to remember. The Banff-Canmore CBC and the Bow Summit CBC each produced record shattering results. For Banff-Canmore, the new record was for number of species. Our previous high was 50 set way back in 1977 and it had been an elusive target ever since. On December 20th, a mild, somewhat breezy day, 54 participants found 54 species, eclipsing the old mark in dramatic style.

The only new species for the count was Great Blue Heron. Interestingly, both Banff and Canmore boasted one that day. A Virginia Rail at the Cave & Basin marsh and an American Tree Sparrow were species reported for only the second time.

Some of the winter finches that were absent (Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin) or in low numbers (Red and White-winged Crossbill) the year before, were back and/or in larger numbers this year, but this was balanced by a decrease of over 750 Bohemian Waxwing. As a result, the total number of individual birds was very similar to that of the previous year – just 87 fewer birds. It should be noted that next year will mark the 30th anniversary of this count.

Eight people traveled to the "Top of the Bow" for the 26th Bow Summit CBC on Deceember 28th. It was a cool but pleasant day (well actually, our Treasurer did complain vociferously about the cold – apparently after a month in Brazil and a month in India she is having some difficulty coping with normal winter conditions in the mountains) just in advance of the arrival of some really frigid Arctic air. We managed to find 12 species including 1 White-tailed Ptarmigan.

The big news from this count was the number of individuals. The previous high for Bow Summit was 433 but a prolific cone crop on the conifers in the vicinity of Bow Pass had attracted unprecedented numbers of winter finches (Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll) that were the major contributors to a record 542 individual birds. Considering that the previous high was, in itself, almost 150 more birds than the next highest year and that in 17 years we had fewer than 100 birds – and in 11 of those years we had fewer than 50 – it is obvious that matching or exceeding the records established this year for our CBCs will present formidable challenges in the years ahead.

Banff-Canmore Count:

Western Grebe	cw	Common Raven	235
Great Blue Heron	2	Black-capped Chickadee	156
Green-winged Teal	3	Mountain Chickadee	214
Mallard	325	Boreal Chickadee	58
Common Goldeneye	19	*chickadee sp.*	109
Barrow's Goldeneye	11	Red-breasted Nuthatch	202
goldeneye sp.	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	8
Bufflehead	1	Brown Creeper	16
Common Merganser	3	Winter Wren	1
Bald Eagle (adult)	2	American Dipper	33
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	11
falcon sp.	1	Townsend's Solitaire	4
Virginia Rail	1	Bohemian Waxwing	30
Killdeer	2	Northern Shrike	1
Wilson's Snipe	1	European Starling	29
Rock Dove	30	American Tree Sparrow	1
Northern Hawk-owl	cw	Song Sparrow	6
Northern Pygmy-owl	2	White-throated Sparrow	1
Belted Kingfisher	6	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Downy Woodpecker	9	Harris' Sparrow	1
Hairy Woodpecker	2	Dark-eyed Junco	80
Three-toed Woodpecker	2	Rusty Blackbird	4
Pileated Woodpecker	1	Pine Grosbeak	21
Gray Jay	30	Red Crossbill	52
Steller's Jay	4	White-winged Crossbill	198
Blue Jay	22	*crossbill sp.*	51
Clark's Nutcracker	119	Common Redpoll	138
Black-billed Magpie	153	Pine Siskin	148
American Crow	10	Evening Grosbeak	32
		House Sparrow	353

CW: reported count week

TOTAL SPECIES: 54
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 2959

Bow Summit Count:

falcon sp.	1	*chickadee sp.*	1
White-tailed Ptarmigan	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10
Three-toed Woodpecker	2	American Dipper	2
Gray Jay	11	Pine Grosbeak	83
Clark's Nutcracker	6	White-winged Crossbill	269
Common Raven	7	Common Redpoll	105
Boreal Chickadee	44		

TOTAL SPECIES: 12
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 542

Count results from 1900 to the present in December are available through the Bird Source web site:
http://www.birdsource.org

Re-establishment of another population of the endangered Banff springs snail

by *Dr. Dwayne Lepitzki*

Following an approved environmental assessment and a more recent evaluation, the light turned green for the second re-establishment of our favourite charismatic microfaunal species - the Banff springs snail. Habitat was secure from human-disturbance, there was plenty of water flowing, and the first re-establishment was looking more and more like a success. Fifty snails were collected from the Upper and Lower Middle Springs, carefully placed in insulated soup containers, and transported to Kidney Spring on 27 November 2003. Under the eye of media (print, radio, and television), Wardens, Communications Specialists, invited guests, and 2 students from Banff's Elementary School, the snails were carefully released into the cistern.

With our fingers crossed, we have returned to the spring every week. Just as was the case with reintroduction to the Upper Middle Spring, numbers dropped immediately. Were they hiding under the rocks or on the little concrete protuberances in the cistern? We'll never know.

Three weeks after the transfer, newly hatched snails appeared. Numbers have slowly increased since then and over 40 were counted on the last day of December 2003. Only time will tell if this second re-establishment is as successful as the first; by January 2004, the 50 snails originally transferred to Upper Middle Spring in November 2002 had blossomed to over 12,000!

Dr. Dwayne Lepitzki is the principal investigator for the Banff Springs Snail Research and Recovery Program. Funding is provided by Banff National Park, Parks Canada Species at Risk program, the Endangered Species Recovery Fund (co-sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund-Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service), and the Bow Valley Naturalists.

Red Fox in the Bow Valley

by *Colleen Campbell*

Fox have been reported historically in Banff, though generally absent for many years. Their slow recovery has been reported during the past decade as far west as Moose Meadows and fox tracks have been reported in transect work done in the Canmore area for several years. This past summer and autumn, reliable visuals of fox in the Bow Valley have come from Exshaw, Canmore and Lake Louise. One was seen hunting in the Sawback, along the Bow Valley Parkway in late October. (Editors note: Anecdotal observations seem to suggest there currently are low numbers of coyotes in the area. Has this reduced the competitive exclusion of foxes?)

photo: Chuck O'Callaghan

Moose in the Bow Valley

by *Mike McIvor*

Jeanette Fish and Chuck O'Callaghan saw this animal in Rainy Bay on January 3rd this year when they were skiing on the Sundance Road. At the same time, nearby, they saw a large bull moose.

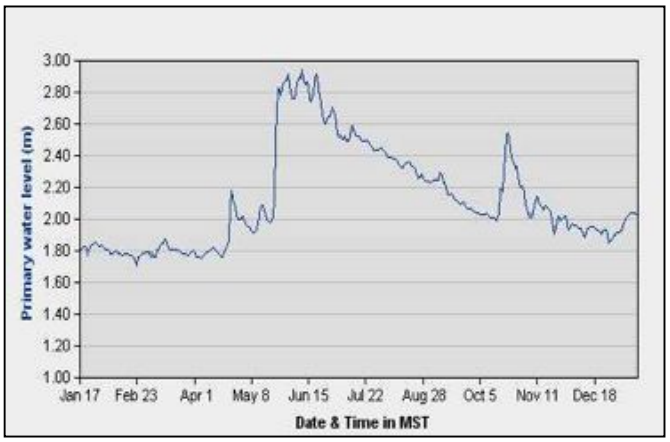
Thirty years ago such sightings as this were relatively common but they have become rare and exciting. Various reasons have been suggested to explain the near disappearance of moose from the Bow Valley but as is usually the case in the natural world, probably a combination of factors have contributed to the current situation. Over the years, moose have been susceptible to mortality on the Trans Canada Highway and the Canadian Pacific Railway; calves particularly, may be vulnerable to wolf predation; many decades of fire suppression have reduced the amount of high quality, early successional habitat preferred by moose; and they have proven to be far less resistant than elk to the debilitating effects of giant liver fluke – a parasite that has thrived in association with high elk numbers.

In the years to come it will be interesting to see if changes to the landscape in the form of highway fencing, provision of wildlife crossing structures, prescribed fires in the Bow Valley, and wildfires in Kootenay National Park, produce the kind of changes that will allow moose populations in this region to return to viable levels. In the meantime, efforts to reduce wildlife – including moose – mortality on the highways and railway must continue.

Is the Drought Over

By *Peter Duck*

One might have thought that the two heavy rain storms that came last October might have eased the summer drought a little. This graph shows the relative level of the Bow River from this time last year to mid January this year. While the river rose to early summer levels as a result of these storms it just as quickly settled down to match the pre-storm recession pattern into the late fall. By mid December the river was as low as it was in mid-January last year. A few storms will not be enough to compensate for several years of low rainfall. Note how the river level rose during the late December and early January cold spell. These rising levels are a result of ice choking the river and not an actual increase in steam flow.



Change in Government Leadership

by *Mike McIvor*

One of new Prime Minister Paul Martin's first task was to appoint a Cabinet. At the same time that Environment Minister David Anderson was re-appointed to the position he held in the previous administration, the Parks Canada Agency was transferred from the department of Canadian Heritage to Environment Canada.

Minister Anderson likes to consider himself an advocate for environmental protection but this somewhat flattering self-assessment may simply reflect an ascendancy of words over deeds. Because in the processes that produced the Species at Risk Act and revisions to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act he behaved as anything but a champion for environmental values.

It is clear that a great amount of public pressure on both the Prime Minister and the Environment Minister will be necessary to convince them that protection of our country's environment in general, and the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity in national parks in particular, must become high ranking priorities for this government.

Why not begin applying that pressure by writing each of them to offer congratulations as they assume their positions of responsibility and to insist that ecological values be at the forefront of federal policy.

Addresses

- **The Right Honourable Paul Martin**
  Prime Minister of Canada
  Fax: (613) 941-6900
  e-mail: pm@pm.gc.ca
- **Hon. David Anderson,**
  Minister, Environment Canada
  Fax: (613) 952-1458
  e-mail: Anderson.D@parl.gc.ca

(mailing address for all above, no postage needed)
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

FROM ROCK DUST WERE YE MADE AND ROCK DUST YE SHALL BE

by *Peter Duck* photo: P. Duck

A local newspaper reported recently that a judge acquitted a man of charges of enticing wildlife. The man had held a rock in his hand on the Minnewanka loop road while bighorn sheep were nearby. A park warden decided to enforce the National Parks Act and charge the man with enticing wildlife with bait. (Of course the concern

with "enticement" is that it leads to habituation of wildlife which is not good for the animals or for people.) The judge concluded that "bait" involves the concept of food. Since the rock was not "food" in the judge's mind, he found that the National Parks Act was unclear and there was reasonable doubt the man could be convicted of enticement using a rock as bait.

My Oxford defines food as "any substance that can be taken into the body of an animal or plant to maintain its life and growth." Any substance. Hmmm. Had the judge spent any time on the Minnewanka loop he could have learned that sheep regularly seek out rock material to meet their nutritional needs. (He might also have seen people dangling shiny metal objects in the water to "bait" fish.)

In fact, mineral licks are one of the main reasons sheep frequent the Loop. Oxford: "mineral - an inorganic substance", "lick - to pass the tongue over". Bighorn sheep are attracted to and eat rock. Sheep in fact, can be seen eating rock material more often than anything else along that piece of road. They even eat salt on roads. That is why Parks tries to avoid putting "rock" salt on the Minnewanka loop where the incident occurred. The judge was wrong. Even by his definition a rock can be considered as bait. The National Park regulations are fine as they are.

Book Reviews

by *Colleen Campbell*

A few good books for late winter nights:
If you aren't disposed to stargazing on these beautiful long winter nights, you may be interested in some good reading. Three excellent books on 'water 'and another on 'fire' could fill the long dark hours of evenings at home. Each of these books is compelling, thought-provoking, and worthy of your time. Though unique in approach, the three books on 'water' complement each other in content and style.

WATER
When it was published, Marq de Villiers' book, Water, won the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction. De Villiers writes about water as a global concern and weaves a story that emphasizes how much we must respect and treasure every drop of the clear liquid we encounter. "Brilliantly researched and written in a taut, economical prose, *Water* is studded with insights into the most explosive issue of the next century. In this remarkable book, de Villiers sounds both a stark warning and offers solutions to the looming crisis of global water shortages."(Text courtesy of Canada Council for the Arts.)
Published 1999, 365 pages + appendices, bibliography and index,

WHOSE WATER IS IT?
This volume, edited by Bernadette McDonald and Douglas Jehl, presents several essays under each of the headings: Ownership, Scarcity, Conflict, and Prospects. The list of authors includes many names that will be recognizable to readers of environmental publications and many of the presenting scientists at the recent 'Mountains as Water Towers' conference held in Banff. Though the content derives from research, it also includes strategies for the individual. The litany of challenges related to water is balanced with discussion of opportunities for changes in attitude and behaviour.
Published 2003, 14 essays, 223 pages + afterword

The RIVERKEEPERS
John Cronin and Robert Kennedy detail the passionate history of the reclamation of the Hudson River from abuse at the hands of government-supported industry. The heroes in this book are not environmentalists; they are the workers along the Hudson, recovering the cultural, spiritual, and economic values of their historic communities. Their actions underscore the fundamental relationships of democracy, environmental health, and long-term economic stability. This is a tale told as an example to inspire each of us to care about our world and to exercise our rights to clean water. The story of the Hudson is universal to rivers all over the world.
Published 1997, 179 pages + appendix and index.

VESTAL FIRE
Though an important natural phenomena that renews habitat and biodiversity, fire inspires fear in us; most of us little understand its ecological importance. **Vestal Fire: An Environmental History, Told Through Fire, of Europe and Europe's Encounter with the World** by Steven J. Pyne will not answer all questions lingering with the smoke of last summer, but it does offer an interesting slant on history. Dr Pyne, a history professor at Arizona State University, has authored a suite of books called Cycle of Fire, much of which material is folded into the pages of Vestal Fire. Its scope is broad, including ecology, philosophy, sociology and history of fire, fire on the land and fire in the hearth. He writes about the chemistry of fire, and the fire gods and goddesses of past cultures. He uses poetry and photographs, drawings, and technical charts to offer a more complex and interesting route towards respect for the fascinating world in which we live.
547 pages + notes, glossary and index.

TREAD WATER OR SWIM TO SHORE?

AN EA PRIMER IN ANTICIPATION OF THE TCH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

by *Peter Duck*

Environmental assessment (EA) is the tool land managers can apply to ensure human endeavours do not adversely affect the environment. With the twinning of the TCH once again in the spot light this process will be applied to planning this huge development in the Park. The federal EA process is so full of subjective decisions that it is only through strong public participation that government discretion will allow environmental values to stay afloat among other more pervasive and, without your voice, more persuasive pressures. Perhaps this review will help those thinking of getting more involved in the coming TCH party to get their minds around this slippery piece of legislation.

WHAT IS THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT?

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) is the piece of legislation that now prescribes when the federal government is required to conduct an environmental assessment and the general process which that assessment must follow. The Act is administered by the Department of the Environment.

PROCESS AND DISCRETION, NOT ENFORCEMENT

It is important to understand that the CEAA defines an environmental planning process rather than establishing a basis for enforcement of environmental regulations. The Act provides a tremendous amount of discretion to the government agency (a "Responsible Authority"or RA) responsible for ensuring that an environmental assessment process is followed to its satisfaction. The Act does not provide for penalties for non-compliance. CEAA is also based on the principle of "self assessment". This principle, vehemently defended by government departments in recent years, means that if a federal department or agency proposes a project or supports a project from one of its client industries it is the entity that determines the quality of the environmental assessment, the nature of the assessment process, and decisions based on that assessment.

WHAT FEDERAL PROJECTS REQUIRE ASSESSMENT?

Not all proposed projects require an assessment. To answer this question one must decide if the project is covered by the Act and if there is federal involvement and if the project has been intentionally exempted from assessment.

Is There Federal Involvement?
In very simple terms an environmental assessment may be required by the Act if the project in question is proposed or otherwise controlled by a federal authority, involves federal land, federal permits, or federal funding. If these "triggers" apply then it must be decided next if the undertaking is a "project" recognized by the Act as requiring assessment.

Is There A "Project"?
The Act applies to "bricks and mortar" projects during which something is actually built. The Inclusion List is a regulation under the Act that identifies some activities that, while they do not involve building something, do require assessment. For example, digging a hole or burning a forest does not require assessment because they are activities during which nothing is built. Commercial recreation in a National Park that requires a business licence is an activity that is specifically identified on the Inclusion List and, therefore, requires an environmental assessment.

Has The Project Been Excluded From Assessment?
While you may have federal involvement and may have a "project" an environmental assessment may not be required. The Exclusion List identifies many projects that are exempted from assessment. These are projects which the government has determined to have insignificant effects if certain conditions apply such as avoiding water bodies.

WHAT TYPE OF ASSESSMENT WILL BE DONE?

If an assessment is required the Act recognizes four basic "levels" or "tracks" the assessment may follow. These include a screening, class screening, comprehensive study, panel review. The Act also allows for mediation to be used in certain circumstances. Parks Canada is unique in the country in that it has also invented the concept of a generic screening which, although not recognized by the Act, has been applied to assessment of licensed activities in the Park. The latter is an excellent example of the huge amount of discretion an RA may use in spite of public calls for more diligent assessment.

More than 95 percent of federal assessments are "screenings". Screening is the least rigorous and most discretionary of the four common assessment tracks. A class screening may be used to assess the effects of a number of similar, typically small and routine projects. All projects initially follow the screening track unless they are of a type identified on the Comprehensive Study List. If the project is on this list, it skips screening and automatically follows the more rigorous comprehensive study track. Both screening and comprehensive study may lead to independent panel review on the recommendation of the RA or if the Minister wishes.

The screening process is conducted completely within the jurisdiction of the responsible authority. Comprehensive study and panel review differ in that they include the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and the Environment Minister in the assessment process. Comprehensive study and panel review also allow for funding of public participants, enhanced opportunities for public participation, and require fundamental EA components such as consideration of alternatives and development of follow-up programs. Inclusion of these planning components in the EA process is at the complete discretion of the RA during a screening.

It is an odd quirk of the Act that projects that are not already on the Comprehensive Study List cannot be raised from screening to the middle ground of comprehensive study. Thus, most assessments are caught between a soft and a hard place. That is, they are either screenings or recommended for full independent panel reviews. When conducting a screening of a large project such as the twinning of the TCH, the RA may use its discretion to include more detailed study and public involvement that imitates a comprehensive study. But this rarely results in the public access and accountability that the Act prescribes for comprehensive study or panel processes.

WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT?

Your guess is as good as mine. There is no clarification in the Act to specify what constitutes credible environmental assessment. BVN foreheads have damaged many administrative brick walls in Banff, Calgary, and Ottawa on this one. This is why Parks Canada can get away with simple generic assessments as full screenings even though the guidance material from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency only recognizes generic assessments as part of a class screening process. When it is in their interest or not threatening to budgets or other commitments to be more rigorous the bells and whistles get added.

Well it is not that bad. The Act, in Section 16, specifies the things that must be considered during an environmental assessment. This includes environmental effects, cumulative effects, significance of the effects, and economically and technically feasible mitigations of the environmental effects. As already mentioned, some things, such as public participation, alternatives, follow-up programs, are required at the comprehensive study and panel level but are included at the RA's discretion in screenings. There is a fairly comprehensive terms of reference for conducting environmental screenings in the mountain national parks but this is not always rigorously applied.

WHO DOES AN EA?

When an assessment is required the responsible authority must ensure that one is completed and that all the requirements of the Act are met before allowing the project to proceed. This does not mean that the RA conducts all of the assessment. The Act allows RAs to delegate the preparation of the assessment report. Unless the project is a government project the RA will usually ask the private sector proponent to pay for and prepare an assessment report. When that report is submitted the public might be asked to comment before the RA decides what action might be taken based on the contents of the report.

WHAT ACTIONS ARE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING?

To keep this article from getting out of hand I will focus on screenings. Once the RA is satisfied with the environmental screening report the Act defines the type of action that may be taken with respect to the project proceeding. (Keeners may now turn to Section 20 of your ~~hymn book~~ Act.) The project may be recommended to proceed as is or accepted with whatever mitigating measures the RA feels are appropriate. If public concern warrants, if there is uncertainty, or if the responsible authority feels there are significant adverse effects on the environment the RA can recommend that the project be reviewed by or "bumped up to" an independent panel process. If the project has significant adverse effects that the RA feels cannot be justified in the circumstances it can be recommended that the project not proceed. (This implies, of course, that if the RA feels that the effects <u>can</u> be justified in the circumstances the project can be given a green light even if there are significant adverse environmental effects.)

It is important to understand that an assessment required by the Act simply leads to informed recommendations that are passed on to those who must issue a formal permit or take some other action that allows a project to proceed. Once the assessment process has been followed the final decision maker can weigh many other societal values such as economics, job creation, national security, or public health concerns in making its decision whether or not and in what form a project may be allowed to proceed.

By now you are grasping the huge amount of discretion allowed by the Act. What is uncertainty, when do you involve the public, how do you measure the level of public concern, when is an adverse environmental effect "significant", and what other values override concerns for environmental quality? There are no objective criteria to address these issues and federal decision makers love it that way. With no objective criteria and no requirement to explain how they came to make their recommendations about a project, administrators and EA practitioners can blow in the political winds while paying lip service to the environment through environmental screening reports.

Minister Anderson promised more meaningful public participation during the recent review of the Act. He is now also minister for the Parks Canada Agency. Let's take him at his word and get a process that allows the public from all viewpoints to influence the planning of a four lane highway in a meaningful way. In his words, lets get an assessment process "worthy of the trust and of the involvement of all Canadians". Screening is the level of assessment that Parks Canada is likely to apply to the coming highway twinning project. In order to swim in the sea of discretion allowed by the Act, or at least to help make it more accountable and transparent, I believe we should call for bumping up to an independent panel review process.

Trans Canada Highway Phase IIIB

by *Mike McIvor*

In October, 2003, several federal Cabinet Ministers announced a funding commitment of $50 million towards "improvements" to the TCH in Banff National Park. The stated purpose of the investment is to make the highway safer for people and wildlife.

Parks Canada has established a Stakeholders Advisory Committee to discuss the nature and extent of the "improvements". Representing the interests of the conservation community on the Committee are Jim Pissot (from Canmore, Defenders of Wildlife Canada) and Dave Poulton (from Calgary, CPAWS). They will be pushing for proper definition of the problem, full exploration of alternative solutions, complete integration of ecological integrity goals, an exemplary standard of environmental assessment, and transparency and accountability in the decision making process.

Jim and Dave will make a good team. It is their role to provide the lines of communication back and forth between the conservation community and the Advisory Committee. Anyone with issues, concerns, or comments to be passed along could contact them directly or can contact Mike McIvor (762-4160) who will be in touch regularly with them.

Aside from the work of this Committee there will be opportunities for the general public to participate through open houses, the environmental assessment process, etc. BVN members should be sure to take part in every opportunity. Whatever final shape the project might take, we should work hard to convince Parks Canada and the federal government that it must achieve world class standards for safety and environmental protection.