

**BOW VALLEY NATURALISTS**  
**NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2006**  
**BOX 1693, BANFF, AB**  
**T1L 1B6**  
**PHONE: 762-4160**

- “What’s New in Grizzly Bear Research”  
*Mike Gibeau*

All events are free! Call 762-1464 for more information.

**OUTINGS**

**MAY SPECIES COUNT**

**Saturday and Sunday, May 27 & 28**

The May Species Count, a province-wide event co-ordinated by the Federation of Alberta Naturalists will be held on **May 27 in the Mount Yamnuska area and on the 28th in the Banff-Canmore area**. We will record species in flower and birds seen and/or heard. Time to test your skills in identifying the world around us and at the same time enjoy springtime in the Bow Valley.

Last year, in the **Yamnuska**, we reported 101 species of plants in flower compared to 86 in 2004. **Banff** had 116 species, 85 in 2004. **Canmore** had 71 species, 54 species in 2004.

The bird numbers compared to the previous year:  
**Yamnuska**: 61 species (67 in 2004).  
**Banff**: 80 species, (70 in 2004).

For more information and to find out how to participate contact:  
**Diane & Mike McIvor at 762-4160**

**“The Big Bow Float: Journey Down the Emerald Thread”**

*A Bow Valley Premiere including Bow Riverkeeper's new film, slides and stories from the trip and displays from other environmental groups working in the valley.*

**Canmore Collegiate Auditorium**  
**Thursday May 25th, 7:00 to 8:30 pm**

For more info. go to [www.bowriverkeeper.org](http://www.bowriverkeeper.org)  
phone # 762-0591,  
Alex Mowat, Program Coordinator, Bow Riverkeeper

**HELP WANTED!**

*Peter Duck*

If you can sharpen and operate a pencil. If you are brave enough to stare down a cocky Red-winged Blackbird. If you dare to watch the sunrise. There's no life like it. We have a job for you! (Skip to the end for essential details.)

For several years BVN has been running a bird banding project in the Bow Valley. The project is part of the MAPS program (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) run by the Institute for Bird Populations based at Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. MAPS's goal is to provide long-term demographic data on land birds as an aid to identifying the causal factors driving population trends documented by other avian monitoring programs such as the North American Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Counts. It is a cooperative effort among public agencies, private organizations, and individual bird banders in North America to operate a continent-wide network of constant-effort mist-netting stations during the breeding season. In short, this represents an example of long term monitoring that is rarely seen but so essential in understanding ecosystem responses to changing environments.

In Banff National Park the MAPS project joins a series of continuous long term monitoring projects such as the TCH wildlife crossings project, Banff Springs Snail project, and herptile population monitoring. Also notable among local long-term monitoring projects are the BVN run Christmas Bird counts and May species counts that have a 30 year continuous record. These are matched only by monitoring of Peyto Glacier that has the longest continuous mass balance record of any glacier in North America and perhaps the world. Cumulatively all of these long term monitoring projects make this area one of the best places on the planet for long term, scientifically valid, understanding of ecosystem changes.

**EVENTS**

**Banff National Park**  
**2006 Research Updates Speaker Series**

**Thursday, May 18, 7 – 9 pm**

**Banff Seniors Centre**

- “The Ya Ha Tinda Ranch: A Study in Home Place”  
*Jim Taylor*
- “Do Less Trees Mean More or Less Damselflies? Results from Sulphur Mountain”  
*Simon Ham*
- “Redstreak Restoration: A Success Story for Bighorns”  
*Alan Dibb/ Rick Kubian*

**Thursday, May 25, 7 – 9 pm**

**Banff Seniors Centre**

- “Beyond Counting Cars: The Bow Valley Parkway Human Simulation Model”  
*Darrell Zell*

We would like the MAPS project to continue to be part of this prestigious and scientifically essential knowledge base. But alas, the project may have fallen on difficult times. Not because of the usual budget issues although that has been a concern. It is after all essentially a volunteer program, which protects it from the vagaries of funding based on changing institutional priorities. But after initial excitement in the early years with lots of folks volunteering to help out and very energetic coordination from committed individuals, interest has waned. BVN came very close to shutting the site down this winter due to changes in people's lives and waning person-power capacity to keep interest alive.

But we have decided to persist for one more year and see what rejuvenation can be achieved. In order to keep things going we need to refresh our pool of volunteers willing to commit to one or two 4 am mornings to ensure our dedicated volunteer banders have the moral and logistical support they need to run an efficient and safe (for the birds) banding session.

We need to set up a schedule for the summer to be sure we have the help we need. We do not need lots of people on any given day. We do need to reestablish a pool of folks with enough experience to take notes, manage mist nets, and bring interesting treats. Enough people to be sure the burden of "being there" does not fall on too few.



American Redstart.

photo: Ken Symington



Rosemary Power and Ken Symington at work.

Come on out! Do it for the birds. Do it for the irreplaceable value of maintaining continuous long term environmental monitoring. Do it for the joy of experiencing the perfection of the morning. Join in for the comradeship found in spending time with a group of people who love being in nature.

Call Peter Duck 762-4335.

## ISSUES

### Lands Adjacent to the Town of Banff *Peter Duck*

#### PARKS CLOSES YOUR FAVOURITE TRAILS IN BOW VALLEY!

Or not? If you read the letters to the editor in the local papers a month or so ago you are likely aware there is a perception that many trails in the lands surrounding the town of Banff may be closed. My advice is to take the time to read the fine print. Understand for yourself what is being recommended and what is being proposed by Parks Canada. Fact is, officially they have proposed nothing yet. What the heck am I talking about?

For the past three years BVN has sat as a representative of local environmental interests on a committee of community representatives discussing proposals for human use around the town of Banff. This area is now known as the "LATB" (Lands Adjacent to the Town of Banff). The community committee was brought together and coordinated by Parks Canada in order to contribute to Parks Canada's own internal development of a much-needed plan for human use in the LATB.

Participation on this committee involved many meetings and I am very grateful to have been able to rely on Mike McIvor to fill in now and again as the months passed. The separate report prepared by the external LATB committee and Parks Canada's response in the form of proposed changes or additions to the Park's management plan will be presented to the public sometime in late spring or early summer.

BVN has tried to be a voice for nature and for appropriate opportunities to experience and learn about nature throughout this process. When the information is released it is quite likely to generate a lot of discussion in the community and perhaps a variety of strong reactions to both the external committee's recommendations and the directions that Parks Canada feels are appropriate. Please join in the discussion! After all, this is rather personal stuff. This is planning for the backyard of a very diverse community.

Many of us in the community are personally attached to this nationally significant ecosystem for very diverse reasons. No surprise, then, that the trail to producing the external committee's recommendations is blazed with some long discussions and sometimes intense but honest debate among neighbours. Eventually, that path led to a report that represents agreement on how to approach several issues of human access while hopefully respecting the inevitable ecological constraints. Parks Canada is in the unenviable position of considering those recommendations in the context of their legal requirement to maintain and restore

ecological integrity in a valley that inevitably is too narrow to keep every one in the ecosystem completely happy.

We hope you will participate in the soon to be announced public information process. Please avoid rumour and innuendo to provide responses based on the actual content of the documents in a respectful way that recognizes the natural limitations of living in the ecological heart of this special place.

Please call Peter Duck (762-4335) if you have any questions.

**Golf Extravaganza in Banff National  
Playground**

*Mike McIvor*

On April 26, 2006 Parks Canada announced its approval of the Canadian Skins Game, an internationally televised golf event to be held at the Fairmont Banff Springs Golf Course on the last part of the August long weekend. This determination occurred on the heels of an environmental assessment charade conducted by Parks Canada after it already had decided the event, expected to attract at least 4,500 spectators, was an appropriate activity for Banff National Park.

BVN refused to participate in the environmental assessment process not wanting to lend any sense of legitimacy to the Skins Game circus. Instead, we wrote Parks Canada Agency CEO Alan Latourelle and Banff Field Unit Superintendent Jillian Roulet urging them to stand up for national park values and reject the proposal. *"It easily could be staged somewhere else"* we said *"and it should be!"* We reminded them that National Parks Policy (Parks Canada's Guiding Principles and Operational Policies) has decreed there shall be no new golf courses constructed in national parks and no consideration given to expansion of existing ones *"due to the amount of land they require and the need for intense manipulation of natural regimes"* (p. 41 our emphasis).

We also quoted from a letter we had received recently from CEO Latourelle in which, referring to Parks Canada's mandate in general, he wrote: *"Our objective is to provide a world-class experience where ecological values are fundamental to that experience"* (our emphasis). Now, it might seem as if including a mass spectator golf game under this umbrella would be an impossible stretch, but unfortunately, senior Parks Canada management can rely on many years of practice manufacturing this kind of spin.

Despite Parks Canada coyly pretending the event would not be approved until the environmental assessment process was completed, it's hard to imagine anyone believed there was the slightest possibility it would be rejected. Anticipating approval, in our letter to the CEO and Superintendent we suggested they be honest when they attempted to justify their decision and attribute it to a desire to promote increased levels of industrial tourism in this park, or whatever else triggered the green light switch. *"But"*, we pleaded, *"please - PLEASE - do not attempt to justify it on the grounds that it will offer a meaningful national park experience."*

Needless to say, the receiving ears were deaf. Here is what Superintendent Roulet said in her approval announcement:

*"The event is expected to provide an opportunity for spectators to enjoy and appreciate Banff National Park's unique nature, culture and history. The international viewing audience will also be able to learn about Canada's first national park".*

And what will the spectators and viewing audience learn about Canada's first national park? Well, she didn't say. If you would like to ask Parks Canada officials this question yourself, or if you object to the idea of holding an event like this in a national park and are worried that what will be learned as a result of it are all the wrong things, feel free to drop them a line. (addresses at end of newsletter).

**The hills are alive...  
...with tunes from CPR's song sheet.**

*Jim Pissot*

The facts are clear. Grain cars hauled by the Canadian Pacific Railway spill grain along the tracks in Banff National Park. Bears and other wildlife come to the tracks, and are struck and killed by CPR locomotives. Yes, CPR invested in a vacuum truck in 1999 and has instructed operators in cleaner grain loading techniques. But wildlife, particularly grizzly bears, continue to be attracted to kernels between the rails. And mothers and cubs continue to be killed by CPR trains.

Four grizzly bears have been struck and killed on CPR tracks since 2000. None of the five cubs left orphaned by these railway deaths survived to adulthood. Considering the loss of these cubs, railway deaths are now the single biggest source of human related grizzly bear deaths in the park—accounting for over 60 percent of all the mortalities.

Grain remains on the rails and in the rocks and gravels of the railroad bed. And it is NOT picked up by the vacuum truck that apparently concentrates on larger piles of grain. In fact, in places where east- and west-bound tracks are side by side, it's easy to see a thick carpet of grain sprouting between the rails that carry loaded cars to export docks on the west coast.

At meetings with Parks Canada and others, CPR has made it clear that the company has done all it is going to do. So, while locomotives continue to crush grizzlies into the ties, and increasing voices call for more responsible action from the Canadian Pacific Railway, CPR staff continues to sing from the same old song sheet.

The three line refrain goes something like this:

***"The railway system "hasn't increased its footprint."***

The tracks and right-of-way aren't any wider. So what? CPR now runs over 30 trains per day through Banff National Park. And they have just announced that they will be hauling even longer trains. The latest Annual Report notes that grain shipments in 2005 were larger than in either 2003 or 2004. So, the footprint may not be much bigger, but the man in the boots has put on a lot of weight.

***"The track... is as clean of grain as we can possibly make it."***

But, with four grizzlies killed over the past five years (and another five orphans lost to the park), this clearly is not enough. Each spring, bears are seen foraging along the tracks for small amounts of grain that dribble from leaking cars. And, with a long history of bears and grain, as many as three generations of grizzlies may be habituated to looking for—and finding—a meal on the tracks. A recently reported grain spill waited at least 36 hours for CPR to respond. Is this as fast as possible?

*“We feel this is an issue that is more than just a railway.”*

In other words, Alberta’s grizzlies face threats in addition to CPR’s grains and trains. Agreed, but both the province and Parks Canada have taken serious steps to reduce bear mortality. The province has suspended the annual grizzly hunt for three years, drafted a recovery plan, and initiated a promising *BearSmart* program. Parks Canada is building wildlife crossings and fencing the TCH, re-routing trails, addressing campgrounds, and educating visitors regularly. Even this is not enough. But so far the Canadian Pacific Railway isn’t doing much more than it was in 1999. Do they think the number of bears killed each year by their trains is acceptable?

In spite of five years of blood on the tracks, the Canadian Pacific Railway has not taken one significant new step to reduce the number of grizzlies and other wildlife its trains kill within Banff National Park. Instead of improving their practices or investigating new methods to conserve wildlife in our park, CPR evades their responsibility by just singing off the same tired song sheet. Their non-responses (no increased footprint, we’re doing the best we can, we’re not the only ones) are hardly worthy of a Canadian industrial icon.

If you are tired of the same old song, drop a line to CPR’s new CEO:

Fred J. Green  
Chief Executive Officer  
Canadian Pacific railway  
401-9th Avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 4Z4

Ask him to fix leaky grain cars, remove all grain from the tracks, and join other stakeholders to explore innovative ways to improve wildlife and railroad safety in Banff National Park. You might remind Mr. Green that the word “Ingenuity” is featured prominently on virtually every page on CPR’s web site.

Jim Pissot, is Executive Director of Defenders of Wildlife (Canada)

**The CP Railway Song**

Hopper Car Henry

(to the tune of "I've been working on the railroad")

A short while ago, this little ditty found its way into the editor's inbox. Hopper Car Henry describes himself as a local train enthusiast.

We kill wildlife on the Railway  
all the livelong day  
We grind griz to CP burgers  
'cause they're on the right of way.  
They can't hear the whistle blowing  
as they Hoover up the grain.  
So we all disdain Enviros  
and celebrate capital gains.

CP don't you toot  
CP don't you toot  
CP don't toot your own horn  
CP don't you toot  
CP don't you toot  
CP don't toot your own horn

We're not the only grizzly killers  
We just do our share.  
Our vacuum cleans the grain up here  
and dumps it over there.  
Yes, our stubborn arms are folded  
We won't do no more.  
We stick fingers in our ears  
as long as Parks won't keep the score.

Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks we know.  
Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks  
Bears are on the tracks we know.

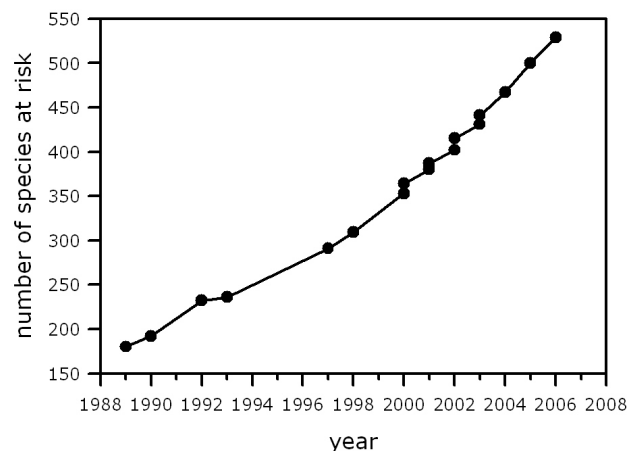
Is someone in the boardroom with Freddy?  
There's someone in the boardroom, I know.  
Is someone in the boardroom with Freddy  
who knows the way to go?

**List of Canadian Species at Risk of  
Extinction Continues to Lengthen**

*Dwayne Lepitzki*

The list of Canadian species at risk of extinction continues to grow. At the latest COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) annual meeting in the Cypress Hills of Saskatchewan at the end of April, 68 status reports were reviewed. Forty-one of these reports were for new species (7 of which were considered not at risk and 2 which were data deficient) while the rest were re-assessments. The list of species that are extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, or special concern was lengthened by 32 to 529. One of the re-assessed species moved to a lower risk category, 2 others were removed from the list, but 7 moved into a higher risk category.

While it is tempting to attribute the steady rise in the number of species at risk (see figure) to worsening environmental conditions, the types of species COSEWIC now examines and just the number of new assessments they review have also increased.



Here in Banff National Park, there’s a mixture of good and bad news from the latest COSEWIC meeting. Long-toed salamanders are newly listed as “not at risk” and rusty black birds as “special concern”. The status report on westslope cutthroat trout was

“withdrawn to clarify eligibility of populations to be assessed” even though the Alberta population was previously listed as threatened by COSEWIC in May 2005. Our current contingent of COSEWIC listed species living, or formerly living, in the park, now sits at 8: extinct - Banff longnose dace; endangered - Banff springs snail; threatened - bison (wood and plains), woodland caribou (southern mountain), peregrine falcon; special concern - wolverine, grizzly bear, and western (boreal) toad.

Visit <http://www.cosewic.gc.ca> for more details.

Dwayne Lepitzki, Ph.D. is Principal Researcher of the Banff springs snail research & recovery program and Member of the COSEWIC Mollusc Species Specialist Subcommittee.



Muskrat

photo: Michael Shuster

## Bow Valley Happenings

### Rodent calisthenics

*Shelley Mardiros*

Did other Bow Valley Naturalists observe the small snow-covered mounds on the far side of the first Vermilion Lake this winter? I didn't notice the mounds until early spring, when the snow had melted and they showed up as brownish lumps on the white background of the ice. From a distance they looked ... well, kind of like skinned seal pups. (Newfoundland was in the news that week.)

Unfortunately, I happened to bump into the BVN prez that day and I remarked on the mystery mounds. He replied dryly: “You don't get out much, do you?” That's how I learned that the thirty or so mounds had been around all winter, camouflaged by snow. They are, apparently, muskrat “push-ups”. In his Handbook of the Canadian Rockies, Ben Gadd describes the push-ups as holes in the ice covered with vegetation brought up from the lake bottom. When the lake has frozen, muskrats chew holes through the ice, then use plant material and mud to make a roof over the opening, creating a miniature lodge. Each push-up has just enough space for one muskrat to haul out and rest or feed after underwater forays.

Muskrats don't hibernate or store food for winter, so push-ups are critical to their winter feeding strategy: they forage under the ice in the dark, ice-cold water for a variety of stems and roots that they gnaw off and take to the nearest push-up to eat. Like beavers, muskrats are aquatic mammals, well-adapted for water living. A relaxed muskrat can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes. However, they are not closely related to beavers, nor are they true rats. Rather, the muskrat has been described as “basically a large field mouse that has adapted to life in and around water.”

Muskrats are subject to regular population fluctuations over a 7- 10 year cycle, with numbers building to a peak that is followed by a drastic decline. The Bow Valley Naturalists documented what surely was a muskrat peak in 1978, when they estimated a population of 100 at Vermilion Lakes. Locals who observed an abundance of muskrats in the Bow River and Vermilion Lakes starting last spring (e.g. Mike McIvor counted 17 muskrats in the Muleshoe area one morning in October) might be alert to the possibility of a population peak followed by a crash in the next year or two.

### Gray Wolf



photo: Doug McKown

When you see the McKown van parked on the Bow Valley Parkway within canoe-carrying distance of the river, you never know what observations and photos Doug will be carrying out with him on his return. A few weeks ago he was paddling alone - much to Donna's chagrin - when he floated past a black wolf, one of the 2 or 3 surviving members of the Bow Valley Pack. Let's hope the transportation corridors are not as deadly for these carnivores this year as in the recent past.

### Barrow's Goldeneye



photo: Koichi Tanaka

For much of the year, goldeneyes are a familiar sight on the rivers, lakes, and ponds of this part of the Rockies. Interestingly, the two species, Common and Barrow's tend to split the seasons between them. There certainly are exceptions, but in general, we see Commons in late fall, winter, and early spring before they move out to breeding sites in central and northern Alberta. The Barrow's arrive in spring, stay to breed, and migrate - probably at least to the southern interior of B.C. or, more likely, to the Pacific coast. Their re-appearance as the ice disappears from the frozen sections of the Bow River is a welcome sign of spring.

PREPARING for CLIMATE CHANGE: a reading list  
*Ed Whittingham*

BVN president (and "your humble newsletter editor") Mike McIvor asked me to put together a short reading list on "the topic of global warming/energy etc for the BVN newsletter." No doubt, his desire for more information sources was piqued by Jim White's January BVN presentation on climate change and by Tim Flannery's much publicized book The Weather Makers. Since joining the Pembina Institute last year, I've had cause to look at a few titles in this, shall we say, niche genre. The following are drawn from my own reading and the recommendations of a couple of Pembina folks in the know:

**Bramley, Matthew. (2005). The Case for Deep Reductions. Ottawa: Pembina Institute.**

When I asked Matthew Bramley, the Pembina Institute's climate change program director, which titles he recommends Matthew replied, "I'd suggest my own report on deep GHG reductions." Fair enough. Downloadable from:  
[http://www.pembina.org/publications\\_item.asp?id=202](http://www.pembina.org/publications_item.asp?id=202),  
Matthew's fairly technical report suggests a maximum level for atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations, ways of reducing emissions to maintain that level, and policy recommendations for Canada. If you're looking for good material for your next badgering letters to Wild Rose MP Myron Thompson and Environment Canada Minister, Rona Ambrose, it's here.

Matthew also mentioned another publication, the recent UK government compilation of climate change science: **Schellhuber, Hans Joachim ed. (2006). Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.** According to Matthew this is the best climate science review until the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) brings out its Fourth Assessment report in 2007. The book and an executive summary are available at:  
[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/internat/dangerous-cc.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/internat/dangerous-cc.htm) (or you could ask about its availability at the public libraries in Banff and Canmore which already contain some of the other titles on this list ).

**Deffeyes, Kenneth S. (2005). Beyond Oil : the view from Hubbert's Peak (1st ed.). New York: Hill and Wang.**

In 2001 Princeton University geology professor (and self-described "oil man") Ken Deffeyes published his first treatment of the peak oil theory, called "Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage." A student of the pioneering petroleum-supply guru M. King Hubbert, named in the title, Deffeyes makes the case for why he thinks oil production is close to peaking with inevitable decline to follow, a prospect with deep and troubling implications for our oil-addicted industrial societies. "Beyond Oil..." is a more expansive follow-up, in which Deffeyes applies the same Hubbert analysis method to possible replacement fuels like natural gas, coal, tar sands, heavy oils, oil shale, uranium, and even hydrogen. In this last chapter Deffeyes lays out his vision for a post-peak oil energy strategy, one that includes a mixture of conservation, unconventional hydrocarbons, renewables, high mileage cars and (groan) nuclear.

**Jaccard, Mark Kenneth. (2005). Sustainable fossil fuels : the unusual suspect in the quest for clean and enduring energy. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.**

Pembina's Mary Griffiths (who just published a scathing report on water use/abuse in the tar sands - <http://www.pembina.org/newsitem.asp?newsid=191&section=9>) recommended Jaccard's book to me. She called it "a thought-provoking assessment of future energy supplies which examines the roles of fossil fuels and the capture of CO2 emissions, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and nuclear energy [again!] in a transition to a sustainable energy future." Based on the few pages I have read so far and the talk that I heard Professor Jaccard give recently in Vancouver, I agree. Furthermore, I recommend it in part as a counterpoint to the peak oil theorists such as Deffeyes and Matthew Simmons (below), as Jaccard argues that the availability of fossil fuels is not the issue, but whether or not we develop them sustainably (as the title suggests).

**Kolbert, Elizabeth. (2006). Field notes from a catastrophe : man, nature, and climate change (1st U.S. ed.). New York: Bloomsbury Pub.**

Time Magazine recently ran a cover about climate change with the title "Be Worried. Be Very Worried" (never a problem for us tree huggers it seems). Kolbert's book is a thorough exposition of why we should be worried, but one written in a readable, almost travel guide style. Like Jaccard she does a good job of outlining the

urgent need for action, while showing examples of effective on-the-ground steps being taken that are both preventative in nature – cutting back on GHG emissions – and mitigative – e.g. Dutch land reform policies based on the likely increase of flooding in many parts of the country. (On this last example, I recently heard the CEO of reinsurer Swiss RE’s American division speak about his company’s business response to climate change. Reinsurers are those mammoth-sized companies whose clients include national governments. He began his talk by showing a slide photo of the gargantuan sea breakers Holland has invested in, and casually mentioned that 60% of the Dutch population lives below sea level. Mr. CEO’s conclusion: climate change is real, it’s the biggest risk facing the insurance industry, and the certainty of premium hikes because of continued “extreme weather events” is real too.)

Note: If you’d like to hear an MP3-based interview with Kolbert, check out [http://www.simonsays.com/content/consumer.cfm?app=podcast\\_archive&sid=33](http://www.simonsays.com/content/consumer.cfm?app=podcast_archive&sid=33).

**Kunstler, James Howard. (2005). The long emergency : surviving the converging catastrophes of the twenty-first century (1st ed.). New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.**

If you want to get really depressed, read this book to learn how the combination of peak oil and climate change will cause us to fundamentally reorganize the way we live: suburbs become ghost towns, downtown cores revitalize, rail as an effective way of moving people around returns, and white collar workers resettle in rural areas and learn how to work as farmhands. Hey... maybe that’s not such a depressing prospect after all! Too bad Banff’s food prices will likely triple in the process.

**Simmons, Matthew R. (2005). Twilight in the desert : the coming Saudi oil shock and the world economy. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.**

While Ken Deffeyes is a Princeton academic, Matthew Simmons runs a hugely successful energy finance company and apparently owns several private jets. Still, the two have come to the same conclusion about hydrocarbon availability. Simmons deals specifically with the question of Saudi Arabia’s oil reserves, the source of so much of the oil that’s combusted around the world on any given day: he argues that they and Saudi future production potential are grossly over-estimated. Either he’s trying to stack his investment deck or his review of 200 some-odd technical papers gives him a vantage point few others share – a good read regardless.

**Vaitheeswaran, Vijay V. (2003). Power to the people : how the coming energy revolution will transform an industry, change our lives, and maybe even save the planet (1st ed.). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.**

I recently heard Vaitheeswaran give the keynote address at a World Wildlife Fund conference on business responses to climate change. The Economist magazine’s energy and environment correspondent, during the address he outlined his belief in the three-pronged combination of energy market liberalization, market-friendly environmental activism, and hydrogen energy as a

tonic for our power and climate woes. Immediately after Vaitheeswaran spoke Dr. Joseph Romm, executive director of the U.S. Center for Energy & Climate Solutions, got up and made a convincing argument as to why hydrogen is a pipe dream. Sigh! Still, when the venerable and stodgy Economist champions the need for activism on climate change (albeit the “market-friendly” kind) it’s worth a look.

Finally, a few that I’m still trying to get to:

**Heinberg, Richard. (2004). Powerdown : options and actions for a post-carbon world. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.**

**Tertzakian, Peter. (2006). A thousand barrels a second : the coming oil break point and the challenges facing an energy dependent world. New York: McGraw-Hill.**

and of course **Flannery, Tim F. Weather Makers : the history and future impact of climate change. Toronto HarperCollins Canada, 2006.** Unfortunately the Banff library’s copy of this last book may very well still be at the McIvor house. (Editor’s note: Not Guilty! But, the fact Ed hasn’t been able to find this at the Banff library - Canmore also has a copy - is a good indication it is being widely circulated and read. And so it should be. The author, an Australian biologist who has done much of his work in the mountains of the tropics, has produced a work that is extremely informative, readable, scary - the scope and scale of climate change will dwarf all other environmental problems - and to a point, hopeful. Please note as well, that as someone who has no clue what kinds of beast are an MP3 or a podcast, I encouraged Ed to include some internet contacts in the belief that many, probably most, BVN members are far less inept than me in cyberspace.)

Ed is living in Banff again after attending York University in Toronto to earn his MBA. He helps to run the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development’s sustainable business consultancy.



Low Townsendia (Townsendia hookeri)  
photo: Diane McIvor

Low Townsendia (Townsendia hookeri) is an early, spring-blooming wildflower of the prairies and dry, exposed sites in the foothills and montane. Its low growing character protects it from drying winds but makes it vulnerable to trampling by people who

may not even be aware of its existence. While not considered a rare plant provincially, Low *Townsendia* has a very restricted distribution in Banff National Park. Perhaps the best site is on the Tunnel Mountain Bench where some parts of the population, beside the very busy trail at the Hoodoos, have already disappeared as a result of heavy off-trail traffic. BVN has brought this matter to the attention of Parks Canada in the hope a solution will be found soon to better protect the unusual - and important - vegetation community of which it is part. Right now, *Townsendia* can be found blooming with a small, bright yellow *draba* (whitlow-grass) nearby, making quite a spectacular spring display.

### BVN Newly Elected Board

A new board was elected at our annual meeting in February. Congratulations to all.

President: Mike McIvor  
 Vice-President: Colleen Campbell  
 Past-President: Peter Duck  
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### Language Matters

*Mike McIvor*

### Integrated or Equal?

In March of this year, BVN wrote Parks Canada Agency CEO, Alan Latourelle to express our great concern over remarks attributed to him about the mandate for managing Canada's national parks. Speaking in January to the board of directors of the Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment (AMPPE), a group that lobbies on behalf of the tourism industry and against restrictions on recreational use or access in the parks, the CEO had referred to the three elements or "pillars" of Parks Canada's mandate: protection, education, and facilitating memorable visitors experiences. And when he was questioned: "Are the three pillars equal?", he replied: "Parks Canada is working toward equal value for each pillar".

Not surprisingly, we felt it essential for the CEO to clarify his position since, as we reminded him, the current mandate with "ecological integrity" as the first priority is so clearly established in policy and legislation. In his response, he wrote at length about Parks Canada's desire "to better integrate the three pillars of the mandate" but made no mention whatsoever, of "equal value". He also provided the clarity we were seeking with a statement that even tourism and other lobby groups should have a difficult time misinterpreting: "I am pleased to confirm Parks Canada's commitment to ecological integrity as our first priority..."

The fact of this matter is that when one element (pillar) of three commands first priority, all three can not possibly be considered "equal". There is no way of knowing whether the CEO's original choice of words was deliberately provocative, intended to hint at forthcoming concessions, or merely careless. But the effect of his words, far from reducing conflict between elements of the mandate, invited it. While he may wish to see the elements integrated, "entwined and they build upon and support each other", some people saw his earlier "working toward equal value" message as a door opening - an opportunity to promote the other elements - particularly visitor experience - not as foundations for maintaining and restoring ecological integrity but as rivals or competitors. It was becoming employed as an argument against ecological integrity if managing on its behalf entailed constraints on human activity.

The lobbying against protection will continue, but at least for now, the language about priorities is not ambiguous.

*Wholeness is the product of the rhythm of the earth. Man in an apartment or motor car - like man in a spaceship - is an occupant of the universe but not part of it. Only when there is a wilderness, can man harmonize his inner being with the wave lengths of the earth. When the earth, its products, its creatures become his concern, man is caught up in a cause greater than his own life and more meaningful. Only when man loses himself in an endeavor of that magnitude does he walk and live with humility and reverence.*

Quote from *William O. Douglas* taken from *The Wild Cascades: Forgotten Parkland*. Sierra Club Books. 1965.

### Addresses

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