



# Wild Times

Summer 2006

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## B.C. Dawdles While Caribou Dwindle



British Columbia's few surviving mountain maribou struggle to find remnants of habitat ravaged by logging, motorized recreation and government indifference.

JOHN BERGENSKE

Conservationists working to save southern B.C.'s endangered mountain caribou are dismayed by the government's failure to announce action for recovery of the dwindling herds.

"There is a major contradiction between what this government says and what it does," said Wildsight caribou advocate Dave Quinn.

"Premier Gordon Campbell talks about the 'sustainability' Olympics, while doing little to stop the slide of B.C.'s endangered species into extinction," he said.

"Government scientists are doing good work. But without the political will to implement the solutions they are proposing, mountain caribou will continue to decline. There is still time, but we lose options every day."

Wildsight and its partners in the Mountain Caribou Project are particularly concerned that the B.C. species-at-risk coordination office, which was put into place almost two years ago with the mandate of "fast-tracking" mountain caribou recovery, has shown little progress. Despite detailed plans available from mountain caribou science team members, announcement of a recovery plan has been delayed at least until fall.

As the result of continued pressure from Wildsight and Mountain Caribou Project member groups some interim measures are in place, including a freeze on commercial recreation tenures in the Kootenays. Wildsight has also secured logging company commitments to defer cutting in critical caribou habitat.

Scientists are clear that recovery of mountain caribou requires that B.C. cease approving logging in mountain caribou habitat, restrict motorized access and deal with the problem of increased predator access to caribou caused by roads and clear cuts.

Mountain caribou in the Purcell Mountains total about 20 animals, though none were sighted north of the St. Mary's River in this year's census. Animals were counted in Perry, Hellroaring and Redding Creeks.

There are now 18 isolated herds identified by B.C. government biologists. Two herds have disappeared altogether. Remaining herds are declining at an average rate of 4.5 percent annually.

## Jumbo Glacier Resort Promoter Seeks New Detour around Kootenay Local Democracy

Jumbo Glacier Resort speculators received a strategic setback when the elected directors of the Regional District of East Kootenay recently rejected an attempt to punt responsibility for the resort scheme to the provincial government in Victoria.

Consequently, the fate of the resort proposal remains with the Regional District — unless promoter Oberto Oberti succeeds in convincing the provincial government to pre-empt local democratic control by unilaterally shifting planning authority to Victoria.

The promoters must have Jumbo Valley rezoned to permit real estate development of the backcountry if their plan to create a mega-resort in the heart of the Purcell Range, west of Invermere, is to proceed.

So far, no application for rezoning has been received by the District. Instead, Oberti has refocused his campaign away from local residents and decision makers and towards government politicians in Victoria.

Despite the Regional District's

clear affirmation of its responsibility for planning, Wildsight expects significant manoeuvring behind the scenes by the proponent and his friends within government — with the objective of denying the local population democratic control over land use.

Wildsight will persist in its work to ensure that Kootenay residents have the opportunity to actively and publicly participate in this decision over the fate of this scientifically established grizzly bear habitat.

Wildsight and the Jumbo Wild community coalition are closely watching for attempts by the promoters and the province to take the decision out of the hands of people in the Kootenays.

Anyone who has not recently made his or her opinion known on the proposed development may visit [www.jumbowild.com](http://www.jumbowild.com) and address a letter to the RDEK noting your objection to resort development in this critical wildlife movement corridor in the Purcells.



## wildsight

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and Southern Rocky Mountain region. This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America.

Wildsight received the 2005 Canadian Environmental Award for Conservation in recognition of its successful work to protect the region's wildlife and wildlands.

For more information, please visit [www.wildsight.ca](http://www.wildsight.ca).

# Full Speed Ahead for Columbia Wetlands Power Boat Regulation

ELLEN ZIMMERMAN

Wildsight is intensifying its determination to achieve reasonable, publicly supported and science-based regulation of motorized boating in the world-renowned Columbia Wetlands.

The Columbia Wetlands were designated in 1996 as a protected area for wildlife.

Under the B.C. Wildlife Act, the province restricts land-based motorized vehicles to avoid potential harm to wildlife and wildlife habitat. But in 2002 the B.C. Court of Appeal denied the province jurisdiction over watercraft. The onus fell upon the federal government to implement a substitute regulation — something Ottawa has failed to deliver after four years.

“While the bureaucracy procrastinates, inappropriate boating behaviours continue to harm wildlife in the Columbia Wetlands,” said Ellen Zimmerman, Wildsight’s Columbia headwaters program manager.

“Wildsight and our partner, the Friends of

the Columbia Wetlands, have acted in good faith for more than four years, responding immediately to all requests for information made to us by the federal government. We would like to see similar responsiveness on the part of the government itself.”

Zimmerman has renewed confidence in prospects for regulation following the public support voiced by Kootenay-Columbia MP Jim Abbott. Said Abbott: “We want a regulation. Period.”

Meanwhile, Wildsighters and other friends of the Columbia Wetlands are being asked to do their bit this summer by reporting every single motorboat and jet ski observed anywhere in the Columbia Wetlands, including the main channel of the river.

Please email reports to Transport Canada’s Sean Payne (paynes@tc.gc.ca), with copies to MP Jim Abbott (abbott2@cyberlink.bc.ca) and Wildsight’s Ellen Zimmerman (ellen@wildsight.ca).



Columbia Lake Provincial Park would be divided by paved roadway to Fairmont resort project.

## Fairmont Resorts to Dubious Consultation to Fight First Nation and Conservationists

Wildsight and others who value the ecological integrity of the east side of Columbia Lake are concerned by the intellectual and social integrity of a so-called “consultation” undertaken by Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.

The consultation was promised by the promoter to fend off, at least temporarily, a move by the Regional District of East Kootenay to rezone a block of land from resort to agricultural use.

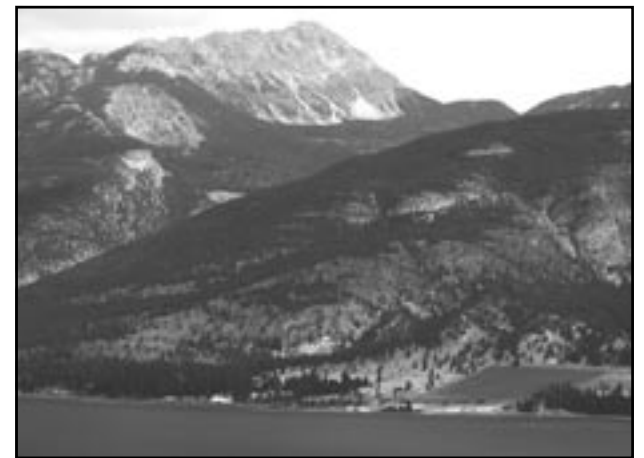
The land, locally known as Lot 48, is owned by Fairmont Hot Springs Resort and is bounded on all sides by Columbia Lake Provincial Park and a provincial wildlife management area.

The Ktunaxa First Nation considers it to be a vital part of its traditional lands and subject to current treaty negotiations.

Public presentations by the promoter’s consultant have made it clear that the consultation promised by the promoter is predicated on the assumption that some form of resort urbanization will take place — thus precluding the legitimate and reasonable First Nation and conservationist case that the land should remain as it is.

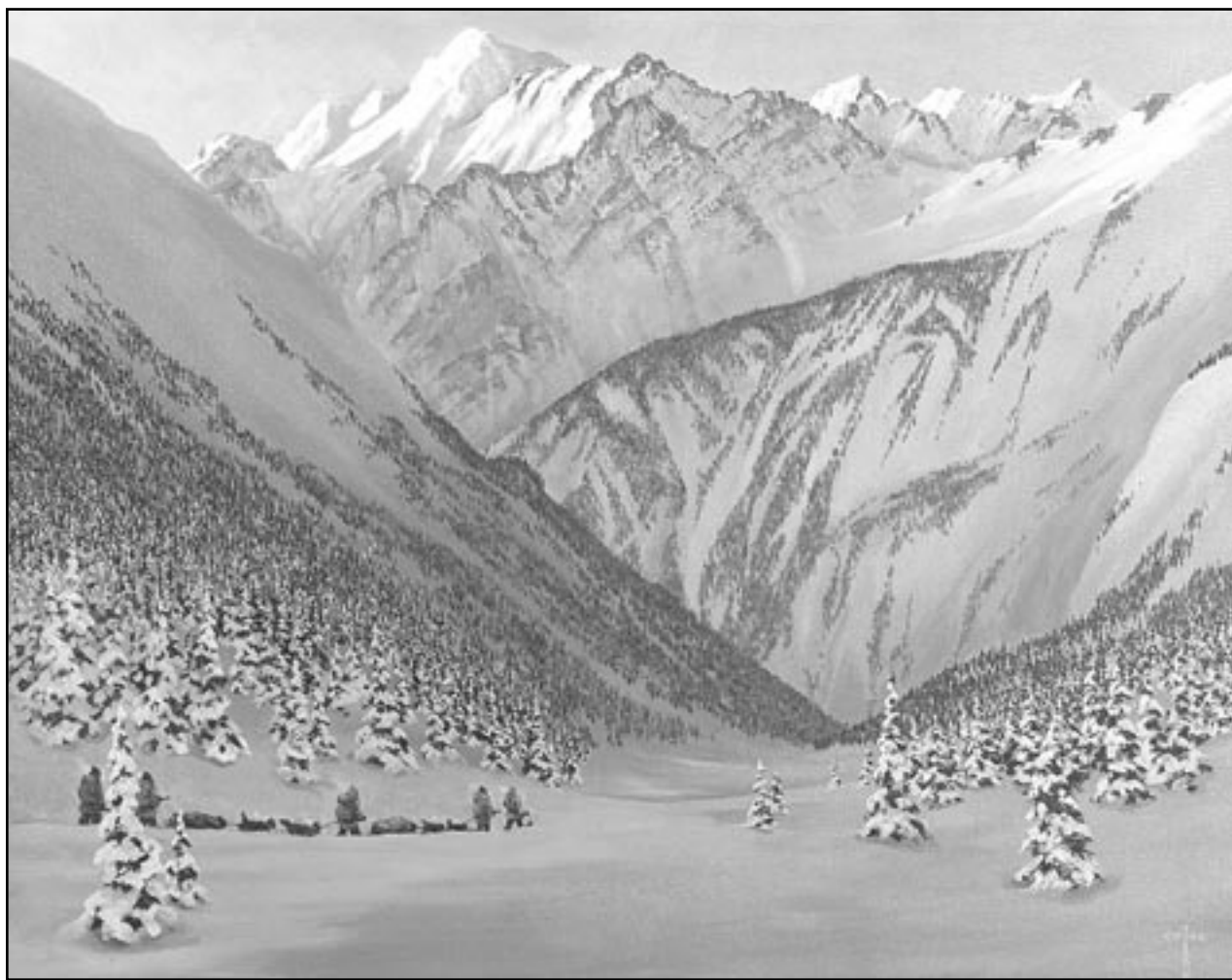
The bighorn sheep, cougars, coyotes, elk, deer and bear that frequent the east side of Columbia Lake are evidence of a healthy and intact ecosystem.

Resort urbanization and building of a roadway through Columbia Lake Park would fragment the ecosystem, displace large carnivores,



Treeless Lot 48 is squeezed between Columbia Lake Park at left and a provincial wildlife area.

## Historic Designation for David Thompson Heritage Lands Gains Provincial Traction



Painting by Joe Cross depicts explorer David Thompson and First Nations guides crossing Athabasca Pass

British Columbia’s government is showing encouraging support for Wildsight’s vision of making a 13,000-hectare area centred on British Columbia’s Athabasca Pass a National Historic Site to honour explorer David Thompson.

Bicentennial celebrations of Thompson’s explorations start next year — a perfect occasion for preserving a landscape he would still recognize.

Provincial Tourism Minister Olga Ilich supported showcasing of the project at B.C.’s visitor centre in Golden. An original Joe Cross painting depicting the 1811 crossing of the Athabasca Pass by Thompson and his First Nations guides is now prominently displayed at the visitor centre.

So much of what David Thompson mapped and wrote about in his journals is forever changed

by human activity. The “David Thompson Heritage Lands” proposed by Wildsight represents the only intact watershed chronicled by the fur trader and adventurer.

The proposal honours the presence of Canada’s First Nations as well as its greatest early geographer who, quite literally, put British Columbia on the map.

The pristine British Columbia portion of the Athabasca Trail region is a distinctive historical, recreational, and ecological treasure.

Some of the highest and most spectacular peaks in the Rockies preside over a virgin interior rain forest of ancient cedar, hemlock and spruce — a place where Thompson’s “new world” remains much as he found it.

harass deer, elk and bighorn sheep, destroy rare plants, and displace resident eagles and osprey.

Condo development would be better confined to already urbanized areas such as Fairmont, Radium, Invermere and Kimberley. Otherwise recreational sprawl will overwhelm natural ecosystems, as it has even in Canada’s national parks.

# Forest Stewardship Council Certification Saves Endangered Forests from Destruction

JOHN BERGENSKE

Eco-certification of forest practices has become a crucial tool to protect endangered ecosystems and improve forestry in British Columbia.

The only certification authority recognized globally by the environmental community and wood buyers is the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), an independent third party organization whose membership includes representatives from environmental organizations, the forest industry, First Nations, and communities.

Wildsight is a member of the FSC British Columbia steering committee. The committee was

charged with creating a standard that reflects appropriate management strategies for the unique forest ecosystems of British Columbia. This standard provides measurable goals for responsible forest management and represents an unprecedented consensus of competing interests.

The standard allows forest managers to demonstrate their achievement of sustainable forest practices, and it allows B.C. to solidify its place in the market as a supplier of certified and responsibly sourced wood products.

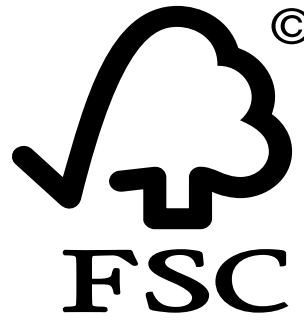
Market campaigns by Wildsight's partner group ForestEthics have influenced major buyers such as Home Depot to

specify FSC-certified wood supplies that do not originate from endangered forests.

Certification provides private-sector opportunities to change forest practices in British Columbia.

ber industry, certification and direct negotiations with forest companies by Wildsight and partner organizations are critical to protecting high-conservation value forest lands.

Tembec has become a Canadian



© The FSC logo identifies products that contain recycled fibre and/or wood fibre from well-managed forests, certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.

FSC Trademark © 1996 Forest Stewardship Council A.C. www.fsc.ca

Since B.C.'s government regulation has been gutted and management of our forests handed over to the tim-

ber industry, certification and direct negotiations with forest companies by Wildsight and partner organizations are critical to protecting high-conservation value forest lands.

## Lake Windermere Residents Engage in Shoreline Stewardship and Water Monitoring

AMANDA FEDRIGO

Based on the findings of a 2005 Lake User Survey, Wildsight is tailoring the Lake Windermere Project to better meet the expressed needs of the lakeside community.

Survey respondents expressed a desire for active stewardship and information about Lake Windermere. Consequently the project kicked off the season with a community workshop to demonstrate water stewardship practices and water testing techniques.

The event was delivered in partnership with the B.C. Lake Stewardship Society whose field educators delivered the half-day workshop.

There are plenty of excellent opportunities to participate this summer.

*Water Quality Monitoring:* Join

program staff on the lake as you help collect water samples and field data in an effort to document the condition of Lake Windermere. Collected data will be used to indicate and direct future maintenance and restoration projects on and around the lake.

*Columbia Valley Dragon Boat Race & Festival:* The project will be hosting a water stewardship tent at the Columbia Valley Dragon Boat Race & Festival on July 29 and 30 at Kinsmen Beach in Invermere.



Wildsight's Heather Leschied samples water from Lake Windermere.

We will have fun and informative workshops for adults followed by a full afternoon of children's programs and activities. Keep an eye out for

our schedule of events coming in late June as there is something for everyone!

*Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-Up Week:* Every September, people from all across Canada gather at their local lakes and rivers to clean up their shorelines. The Lake Windermere clean-up event has, in the past, been held during the long weekend in May. Beginning this year, the event will take place on Saturday September 16 to coincide with national efforts to tidy shorelines after a long summer of intensive use.

The local Wildsight-Invermere Branch will sponsor a separate spring shoreline clean-up starting next year to catch wayward winter waste. This is a great event for community associations, youth clubs, local businesses and families to lend a hand for our lovely lake!

*Watercraft Counts:* Spend a day with a friend or make a new one as you monitor and document watercraft activity on Lake Windermere from a land-based lookout point. This information is important to determine the trends and patterns of recreational boating on the lake. This activity is ideal for those in good physical fitness (required to get to lookout point).

For information or to participate in any of these events, please contact 250.341.6898 or email [hwhc@wildsight.ca](mailto:hwhc@wildsight.ca)

FSC certification carries high value because it is the only seal of approval that involves intensive third party assessment of a company's practices and is not an industry-sponsored public relations ploy.

Wildsight is presently engaged in assessments of Tembec's practices and planning in the Cranbrook Timber Supply Area and provides direct input to the FSC auditors.

Wildsight worked directly with Tembec in revising management practices for the company's Parson Tree Farm and operations in the Invermere Timber Supply Area.

Successful negotiations resulted in significant commitments by the company that have become conditions of certification. These include more than 100,000 hectares of Endangered Forest mapped as ecological reserves, and an additional 50,000 hectares of High-Conservation Value Forest to be managed with elevated levels of ecosystem protection. Wildsight expects to see these numbers double as the certification process moves forward.

Wildsight is also engaging both Canfor and B.C. Timber Sales (the government's timber sales agent) with an eye to moving them toward Forest Stewardship Council certification in the future.

Our objective remains to map and designate High-Conservation Value Forests with all major forest licensees in the region.

The East Kootenay is the only forest region in British Columbia to have such an extensive assessment of threatened forest ecosystems.

Wildsight envisions the Kootenay region becoming a global leader in ecosystem-based management and sustainable forestry.

# Sustaining a Conservation Ethic Starts with Schools and Students

Everyone, everywhere is talking sustainability, whether it be for grizzly bear hunting, motorized recreation in the backcountry. Wildsight, for its part, is creating a model of sustainability in environmental education.

“We are just wrapping up our sixth season of ecosystem-awareness field trips for students throughout the Columbia Basin,” said Wildsight Environmental Education Program Manager



Interpreter Nancie Dohan leads Classroom with Outdoors field trip.

Lee-Anne Walker. “On any given day in June, there could be as many as 11 separate field trips taking hundreds of grade 4-7 students on all-day outdoors experiences — from Alberta’s Crowsnest Pass to the east, Nakusp to the west, Valemount to the north, and Creston to the south.”

Since 2000, nearly 24,000 students have investigated plants, observed animals from insects to moose, discovered decomposing fungi, considered non-living elements such as water, air and soil, and studied the interrelationships that support healthy natural ecosystems.

Classroom with Outdoors uses hands-on activities, peer teaching, investigative ecology, games and role-playing to keep the students engaged.

Environmental education provides an opportunity for young people to learn about the natural world around them, develop investigative skills and reduce their impact while foster-

ing a sense of appreciation and stewardship of the earth. Sustainable environmental education requires a long-term commitment.

Wildsight is steadfast in its determination to nurture a conservation ethic in communities throughout the Canadian Rocky and Columbia Mountains. We are at the same time addressing the issue of financial sustainability in environmental education.

Funders of Classroom with Outdoors include Columbia Basin Trust, Alberta EcoTrust Foundation, Nature Canada, B.C. Gaming Commission, Shell Environmental Fund, Vancouver Foundation and corporate sponsors including Tembec, TransCanada, Devon Canada and Teck Cominco.

From a purely business perspective, is Classroom with Outdoors financially self-sustaining? No, and it could not be. If we were to charge users the full cost of the program, schools simply could not afford it. This year, for the first time, the program implemented a \$5-per-student fee that was, in most cases, covered by parent advisory committees or by schools directly.

This shows teachers and parents value the program and its link to the provincial curriculum. What will it take to make the program financially sustainable over the long run? Wildsight will be asking school districts throughout the region to match the funding provided by Columbia Basin Trust. We must also seek continuing support from the non-profit sector and from corporate sponsors and private donors.

Is Classroom with Outdoors environmentally sustainable? From an impact perspective, it is. Sites for field trips are chosen carefully to avoid fragile areas.

What is unquestionably sustainable is Wildsight’s commitment to Classroom with Outdoors and its mission of nurturing a community conservation ethic for future generations.

## Government Asks Wildsight for Conservationist Perspective in Revision of Provincial Energy and Mining Policies

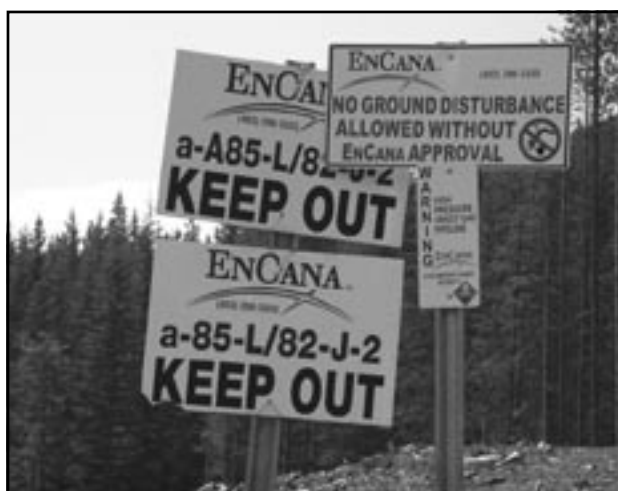
The provincial government has asked Wildsight to participate in a consultation on energy and mining policy.

Among the issues of direct concern to Wildsight are environmental management of existing coal mines in the Elk Valley, four new coal mine proposals for the Elk and Flathead Valleys, EnCana’s coalbed methane drilling north of Elkford, the Elk Valley Coal Corporation proposal for a coal-fired thermal electrical generation plant, and the ongoing decommissioning of the Sullivan lead and zinc mine in Kimberley.

The government has asked conservation organizations to identify hot button issues. This at least gives Wildsight an opportunity to register our concerns with the provincial bureaucracy. Wildsight’s Energy and Mining Program Manager Casey Brennan has met several times with staff of the ministry of energy, mines and

petroleum resources.

It remains to be seen whether this consultation is a public relations smokescreen or a genuine desire to improve policy and regulation.



EnCana coalbed methane extraction near Elkford



Mountain-top removal coal mining at Elk Valley Coal’s Elkview Mine in Sparwood, B.C. Government is considering similar mines for wildlife-rich Flathead Valley, as yet unspoiled by permanent industrialization.

## Flathead Future High on Conservationists’ Agenda as Global Coal Rush Intensifies Push for Mountain-top Removal

CASEY BRENNAN

Wildsight continues its commitment to a wild Flathead Valley in British Columbia’s southeastern corner. We are working with partners to protect the watershed from new industrial activity, while deepening scientific understanding of this important wilderness area.

The Wild Flathead team is committed to establishing a wildlife sanctuary in the one third of the valley directly abutting Alberta and Montana. Permanent protection of key wilderness areas is an essential part of the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) vision of an interconnected matrix of wildlife corridors and sanctuaries in the interior mountain ranges of Canada and the northern U.S.

Strong scientific evidence supports the need for wildlife refuges that are protected from intensive human land uses such as extractive industrial activities, hunting and motorized activity. A core sanctuary in the Flathead Valley is essential to maintain the densest population of grizzlies in the interior of North America. We must make space for nature if we wish to share this land with the majestic creatures this area is known for worldwide. The health of our human communities depends on the health of our environment and making space for nature is a necessary part of achieving that healthy balance.

Company activity driven by the global coal rush is not being adequately managed by the provincial government. Foreign and domestic coal interests are pushing ahead with loosely regulated drilling and trenching programs, and seeking approval for open pit mining in the Flathead watershed, with little concern for the impact on wilderness values. The black-or-white, two-zone mining policy B.C. decreed to attracting mining investment has distorted public stewardship of the people’s mineral and environmental assets.

Wildsight will be leading one-day and overnight field trips to the Flathead Valley this summer. We want local people to experience this beautiful area and gain a first-hand understanding of why it is so important that the Flathead Valley stay wild and connected. If you would like to join one of these trips, please contact Casey Brennan at [casey@wildsight.ca](mailto:casey@wildsight.ca) or 250.423.2603.

# Sullivan Mine Tragedy Means Reassessment of Closure Plan

LAURA DUNCAN

Reclamation at Teck Cominco's Sullivan lead and zinc mine in Kimberley is a large and complex experiment. The admirable intentions are to capture contaminants before they enter the environment and to return the land to wildlife habitat. But this kind of project is fraught with unknowns.

Over the last 15 years of active reclamation, the Sullivan has had its share of surprises, but none so shocking as the tragedy of May 15-17 when four persons died, apparently from a lack of oxygen.

Water quality samples had been taken from a reclamation pumphouse for several years, with no inkling that danger lurked. Environmental consultant Doug Erickson entered the shed to take a routine sample on May 15. On May 17, Teck Cominco's Bob Newcombe found Doug motionless in the shed. Paramedics Kim Weitzel and Shawn Currier answered Bob's call for assistance. All three entered the shed to help Erickson, only to be overcome themselves.

The shock of this event comes at many levels. Foremost is the grief felt by family, friends and colleagues at the loss of four vibrant lives. Second is the totally unexpected nature of the accident: There was absolutely no reason for any of the four to suspect the interior of the pumphouse to be place of danger. Third is the fact that the cause of these deaths remains unknown.

All that authorities had determined more than a month later is that the pumphouse was oxygen deprived. No trace of toxic gas or gases has been found. Autopsies have revealed no answers. Why was this shed lacking in oxygen? What caused oxygen to be depleted? What changed in the time between the last water quality sampling? What continues to change?

The pumphouse sits at the toe of the No. 1 waste rock dump which, because it is chemically reactive and producing acid, was covered with two layers of soil and vegetation in hopes of minimizing acidic leachate. Leachate was collected at the pumphouse for treatment. Is there a link between the dumps, the covers on the dumps, the collection of the leachate and the events in the pumphouse? To date, none of these questions have been answered.

As the physical reclamation activity at the Sullivan winds down, a process known as the "human health and ecological risk assessment" is taking place to identify long-term dangers. The fact that this danger had not even been hinted at by the risk assessment throws the process into question. What other risks have not been anticipated?

We have a duty to learn from the tragedy. Great uncertainties remain about the chemical, biological and physical processes that continue within the Sullivan property.

For the sake of the both individuals and the community, we must accept the following lessons:

- Much about the reclamation processes is not understood.
- We must consider all ideas and issues, however unlikely.
- Government agencies must increase staffing so that they can be full and active participants in the closure and the risk assessment.
- Findings of the investigation into this tragedy must be shared fully with the public.
- Results of the risk assessment must be public.
- The risk assessment and Sullivan Public Liaison Committee processes must become more democratic.
- We must accept that public oversight is more vital than ever.

*Laura Duncan is Wildsight's representative on the Sullivan Public Liaison Committee.*



The conservation community lost a much-loved member in the Sullivan mine tragedy in Kimberley. Doug Erickson died May 15 while doing routine water sampling of acid rock drainage flowing from a reclaimed mining waste dump. Doug was a long-time Wildsight member whose strong environmental ethic and passion for music touched us all. He will be forever missed.

## Dooger

"Sunning your teeth again, Doug?" asked one of 'Dooger' Erickson's numerous lady friends as we baked in the Purcell sun and snow at Boulder Hut.

Propped against skis planted in the snow for a lunch break, Dooger, relaxed his usual wide-open grin and growled, "You bet!"

The news that Doug had departed the Kootenays for good coincided poignantly with a dramatic rise in the rivers he loved so much – it seemed that the land, like Doug's family and friends, felt the loss and it's tears roared down the valleys in a boiling muddy freshet.

Dooger was an outspoken celebrant of wilderness and wild spaces. Years spent working in places like Elk Lakes and Assiniboine helped shape this appreciation.

He practiced joyfulness religiously – and was exceptionally and unquestioningly generous with that joy.

Doug would want his passing to ignite a conflagration of joy in the community he left behind. He would want us to smell the flowers, to sit and soak in the view, to take time to be with friends, to make music and love, and to celebrate and protect this unique landscape we live in. He would want us to spend considerable parts of our days sunning our teeth.

Wherever Doug is, his spirit is irrevocably fused into this small corner of the world. His energies touched the people of the Kootenays, and left a warm glow of "what really matters" in a radius that reached far and wide from its centre in Haha Valley.

We know he is out there, forever not taking anything too seriously, forever making people feel like a million bucks, and forever sunning his teeth.

Dave Quinn



## West Fernie Wetlands Project Highlights Summer Initiatives of Wildsight Elk Valley

ANGIE BRYANS

Wildsight Elk Valley's freshest initiative is the assessment, enhancement and interpretation of the West Fernie wetlands.

The objective is to inspire local residents to preserve this valuable resource, rather than being indifferent to the actions of some residents who periodically drain it to expand their backyards.

In any part of the world, a clean and steady supply of water is the most important and essential of all resources. Without it, life simply cannot exist, and wetlands have a crucial role in preserving our access to a reliable supply of clean water.



In an earlier project Fernie volunteers remove chunks of asphalt dumped into city-owned Leroux Wetlands

Canada is home to nearly 25 percent of the wetlands on Earth, according to Ducks Unlimited (<http://www.ducks.ca>).

In fact, 14 percent of Canada's total area is covered by wetlands, not only providing habitat to over 600 species of wildlife, but also providing a valuable service to humanity by acting as a buffer between water sources and land-based activities such as agriculture.

Wetlands reduce the impact of seasonal flooding, prevent soil erosion, recharge ground water, remove and store greenhouse gases and remove as much as 90 percent of the toxins and bacteria that flow into our water sources on a regular basis.

Despite the value of their ecological services, as much as 70 percent of original wetlands has been lost in some areas of the country, as they are drained and destroyed to support increased agriculture or urban construction.

With this in mind, throughout the summer and fall, Wildsight Elk Valley will be leading field trips to the West Fernie wetlands, under the leadership of Lee-Anne Walker, education program manager for Wildsight. The successful model developed by the B.C. Wildlife Federation's WetlandKeepers Program will guide the West Fernie wetlands project.

This is an excellent opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community, as well as

learn valuable skills, such as how to identify and inventory local plant and animal species. Please contact Lee-Anne Walker at 250.423.4306 or at [lawalker@wildsight.ca](mailto:lawalker@wildsight.ca), for more information and field trip dates.

In other news, Wildsight is working with partner organizations Advocates for Local Living and Elk Valley Bear Aware.

Advocates for Local Living envisions a thriving, affordable and inclusive community engaged in creating a local economy that evolves in balance with social and environmental values, and works to encourage this through education, advocacy and events. The group has been a part of the community since 2004, most recently part-

## Fernie Hobby Rancher Creates Wildlife Corridor through Cattle Enclosures



West Fernie cattle owner Lorenzo Rousselle points out bear tracks in pathway through fenced pasture.

Coal miner Lorenzo Rousselle runs a dozen or so cattle on his mountain-side hobby ranch in West Fernie. Every year, Rousselle had to repair the property's network of fencing breached by bears seeking a route from Mount Fernie to their habitual crossing of the Elk River on their way to Coal Creek Valley.

This year, instead, Rousselle decided to reconfigure his cattle enclosures, removing eight runs of barbed wire and creating a clear corridor for bears and ungulates.

"It's a win-win — for me and for wildlife," said Rousselle.

## Wildsight Entry Wins First for Derby Cart Decoration



Madison Lewis of Fernie at wheel of Wildsight's winning soapbox derby entry.

Ten-year-old Madison Lewis honourably piloted Wildsight Elk Valley's entry in the annual Fernie Knights of Columbus Soapbox Derby in mid-June.

While Wildsight did not place among the top speedsters, they did earn a first for best-decorated cart.

Wildsight's Keya White painted the vehicle with animal figures. The cart itself was provided by event organizer Butch Coultree.

nering with the Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the "Think Local First" coalition, which promotes shopping locally.

Bear Aware is an initiative funded by the B.C. Conservation Foundation, the City of Fernie and Wildsight, aimed at reducing bear-human conflict through education, innovation and cooperation, in order to "keep our communities safe and bears wild".

This year, Kathy Murray and Sarah Smith will be coordinating activities in Fernie, the surrounding Elk Valley and South Country.

In addition to delivering the Bear Aware educational program, Kathy and Sarah will be working with local municipal and regional governments to promote the separate Bear Smart community initiative, which requires a bear hazard assessment, preparation of a bear-human conflict management plan and implementation of Bear Smart bylaws to render unlawful the provision of food to bears as a result of intent, neglect or irresponsible management of attractants.

This summer, Bear Aware will also be hosting a movie night featuring the film "Showdown at Grizzly River" and a slideshow by renowned wildlife photographer Terry Parker. Keep watch on [www.wildsight.ca](http://www.wildsight.ca) for details and dates, and be sure to keep an eye out for Kathy and Sarah at local farmers markets, community events and on door to door campaigns in your neighbourhood.

## Wildsight Invermere Urges Town Council to Save Night Sky from Light Pollution

Wildsight Invermere is urging the District of Invermere to implement the exterior lighting guidelines of its official community plan: "Where possible a dark sky policy shall be implemented to reduce glare and light pollution throughout the town".

The policy has been neglected in the rush of construction in Invermere. Excessive site lighting means energy waste and obliteration of the natural night sky. Wildsight's Arnor Larson, an accomplished amateur astronomer, photographer and mountain guide, is gathering examples of responsible lighting ordinances in force elsewhere in North America.

Wildsight hopes that Invermere will craft its own lighting bylaw to enhance quality of life in the community, while substantially reducing wasteful energy consumption.

The branch is also planning an initiative to reduce the use of plastic grocery bags and intends to meet with supermarket managers to discuss the use of biodegradable bags, while continuing to promote the use of reusable fabric bags.

## Golden Branch Wants More, Better Recycling Options

Wildsight Golden has initiated a petition to express support for improved recycling opportunities in the area.

The petition calls on the Columbia Shuswap Regional District to add cardboard and plastics to the metal, glass and paper currently collected.

Wildsight volunteers aim to amass at least 1,000 signatures asking that recycling opportunities equal those available in neighbouring regional districts.

## Wildsight/EKES Creston Valley Presentation Series

The branch's Fall 2006 series begins Oct. 3 with Dave Quinn showing two short films: "Sanctified" and "Lost People of Mountain Village." From Golden B.C., Ellen Zimmerman, winner of the Yves Rocher Foundation's Woman of the Earth award, will discuss her continuing efforts to protect the headwaters of the Columbia River. In November, Dr. Michael Proctor will return with an update on the state of grizzly bears in the area. The series concludes with a winter solstice slide show of local hikes.



Fernie Secondary School students, collaborated with Fernie Alpine Resort and Agri Green Biodiesel of Sparwood to convert deep-fryer waste oil into biodiesel to fuel resort's heavy equipment. Nature's zero-waste principle proved to be a sound business strategy.

## High Schoolers' French-Fry Habit Fuels Front-End Loader

Fernie High School Students participating in Wildsight's Rocky Mountain Education Series have learned how to turn a byproduct of their prodigious penchant for french fries into a benign fuel.

The Zero Waste pilot program provided students with insight into business planning and a practical understanding of how solutions to material problems can be extracted from basic principles of ecology. Nature generates no waste. Applying the zero-waste principle to commerce was the core of the student's experience.

The students developed the business case for reducing waste, learned how to convert used french fry oil into fuel and then planned a public event where the biodiesel was actually tested in one of the resort's heavy loaders.

The Rocky Mountain Education Series is set to expand next year with funding support from Columbia Basin Trust and EcoAction. Wildsight Elk Valley's Community Program Coordinator Dawn Deydey will continue to lead the program, which will include both elementary and high school students in a variety of innovative environmental education experiences.



Join wildsight and make a difference!

Become a force for conservation in Canada's Columbia and southern Rockies region.

Please sign me up as a supporter of an organization that makes a difference.

- \$20 - individual       \$25 - family
- I would like to make a donation to support your vital work.  
 Enclosed is a cheque for \$

I would like to be registered as a branch member of

- Kimberley/Cranbrook     Creston Valley     Elk Valley
- Golden                       Invermere

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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keep it **kootenay**



Name:	Scott Niedermayer	
Occupation:	NHL Defenseman	
Wild About:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pond hockey	
Not Wild About:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-season games, long road trips	
Wild Words:	<b>Keep the decision local. Keep Jumbo wild.</b>	
Signature:		22727
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