Maintenance at Kluskoil Lake Poses Challenge

BY PAULA CALL, CARIBOO DISTRICT

Kluskoil Lake is a 15,548 ha wilderness park located northeast of Quesnel. Designated in July 1995, the park protects representative watersheds, deciduous forests, and wetlands.

There is a small 3-site campground with limited facilities situated on Kluskoil Lake. Maintaining these sites posed a problem for our staff as, in order to access the campground, it is necessary to travel over a rough four-wheel drive only gravel road. The road is so rough it did not make it feasible for our staff or a maintenance contractor to drive in, even with four-wheel drive. The best way in was to walk or go by horseback, and as the nearest “good” road is 28 km from the campground it was decided going in by horseback was the best option.

Now came the task of finding someone in the area who could supply horses to both BC Parks and a maintenance contractor. Don Olesiuk, Area Supervisor was told of a local rancher who had horses, and who also may be interested in maintaining the site. Don contacted Richard and Marlene Pegg of Pelican Lake Ranch, and a contract was signed for rental of horses as well as for site maintenance at Kluskoil Lake. What makes this maintenance contract unique is that the Peggs don’t use a vehicle to haul supplies in and garbage out, but rather travel by horseback.

If you ever plan to visit the area leave your truck at the Echiniko River crossing and hike, mountain bike or ride a horse; you will be glad you did.

Inside...

Maintenance at Kluskoil Lake ......................... 1
B.C.’s Park Legacy Project Update ......................... 1
1998 Wooden Broom Bonspiel .......................... 2
Forest Service Backpackers ......................... 2
Reservation News: Statistics and Goals .................... 3
Shooting the Berg Lake Trail ......................... 3
Federal Provincial Parks Management Course ...... 4
Setting Priorities ........................................... 5
Uniform News ............................................. 6
Coffee Fans Take Note ................................. 6
Protecting Mara Meadows ......................... 7
Jack Meet Jack ........................................... 8
A Rare Find ........................................... 8

Happy Valentine’s Day!
Visions is produced six times per year by BC Parks, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, to maintain commitment to quality service and stewardship and to encourage innovation by everyone directly involved or interested in BC Parks.

Visions Newsletter is posted on BC Parks’ web site: www.elp.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/whatsnew/what.htm. As Visions is now available on the internet, please let us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list.

To contact us regarding changes to Visions’ mailing list or to receive a free subscription:
• call: (250) 952-6709
• send an e-mail note to: ParkInfo@prkvictoria.elp.gov.bc.ca
• write to: Visions, BC Parks
800 Johnson Street, Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4 CANADA.

Articles from readers are welcome. Deadline for material in the next issue is March 1, 1998.

---

1998 Wooden Broom Bonspiel
BY THE WOODEN BROOM COMMITTEE

It is time once again to announce the upcoming annual BC Parks Wooden Broom Bonspiel!

We guarantee a great time—four games, dinner, dance and everyone gets prizes! If you have not been before now is the time! Participants come from all over the province and it is a great opportunity to renew old acquaintances and start new ones!

This bonspiel is open to BC Parks staff (current and past, including partners and family members), permittees and BC Parks contractors. We also invite the local BC Lands, BC Environment and Ministry of Highways staff.

Location:
Kamloops Curling Club, Kamloops

Dates:
Saturday and Sunday, March 21 and 22, 1998

Fees:
$30.00/person OR $120/rink UNTIL FEBRUARY 28, 1998
$35.00/person OR $140/rink AFTER FEBRUARY 28, 1998 (please make cheques payable to: Wooden Broom Bonspiel)

If you will only be attending the dinner and dance on Saturday night: $12.00

Registration:
Send your name (or the names of all members on your rink) to:
Ron Routledge
1210 McGill Road, Kamloops, BC V2C 6N6

Note: after February 28, 1998 the fees are higher and we cannot guarantee you a spot!

Remember, this is a FUN EVENT, so you do not need any previous curling experience! Just ask some of us who only curl once a year at the bonspiel! So don’t miss out this year.

Register as an individual, pair, or trio and we will put a team together for you to curl with.

---

Forest Service Backpackers
EXERCFITED FROM AN ARTICLE BY TOM STEINSTRA AND PUBLISHED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND EXAMINER, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1997.

This list is circulating among Forest Service employees. These are actual comments left last year on Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by backpackers completing wilderness camping trips:

“A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call.”

“Escalators would help on steep uphill sections.”

“Instead of permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce worldwide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness.”

“Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands.”

“Ban walking sticks in wilderness. Hikers that use walking sticks are more likely to chase animals.”

“All the mile markers are missing this year.”
Reservation News - Statistics and Goals

BY DEBBY FUNK, PARKS & ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MGMT. BRANCH

Year two of the Discover Camping reservation service saw an increase of around 7,500 reservations, totalling 47,900 for 1997. This amounted to 143,500 camper nights which was about a 22,000 increase from 1996. A total of approximately 2.08 million dollars in campsite fees was collected for Park Facility Operators by the service.

Some general trends that were noted through numerous surveys showed that parks (especially medium sized parks) that were on the reservation system did about 2-3% better as compared to parks that were not on the system. The service appeared to stabilize use even though weather throughout the summer was not all that pleasant! One other trend showed that there was an increase of approximately one day to the average nights stay of visitors in parks that were on the reservation system.

Districts and Park Facility Operators reported that the service ran much smoother in 1997, since everyone was more experienced and some of the “bugs” were worked out. Some benefits were reported by Park Facility Operators, park staff and the public included:

- Reducing stress associated with finding a campsite.
- Improving access to Parks all over the province.
- Improving campground business practices by more efficient check ins, fewer lineups, less public driving through campgrounds looking for sites.
- Better at predicting when more staff are needed to attend the campers since check in/check out times are known.

Goals for 1998

Since the Discover Camping reservation service is a “user pay” system, one of the goals for 1998 is to ensure that the costs of running the system are covered. Partners in Discover Camping (BC TEL Interactive, Pacific Rim National Park and BC Parks) will work together to reduce “talk time,” provide the capability of making a reservation electronically and add more campsites to the system. Through a financial forecast the goal is to reach the “break even point” this year, and potentially have a surplus of dollars by the end of the season.

If you have any questions on the reservation service, please call me at (250) 387-4356.

Shooting the Berg Lake Trail

BY MICK HARPER, WRITER/PRODUCER, PGT

BC Parks is going to great lengths to preserve the Berg Lake Trail in Mount Robson Provincial Park. As a part of these efforts, PGT was hired to produce an orientation video on the trail, designed to educate visitors on their environmental impact and prepare them for a truly unique recreational experience.

The concept for the video was to follow two hikers up the trail and explain step-by-step the factors necessary to consider before attempting the journey: The terrain, distance and fitness level; dressing properly for changing weather conditions; first aid, food and water; backcountry ethics and trail etiquette. Other elements of the video include highlighting the history and magnificent scenery.

After a month of writing, rewriting and planning, Cameraman Dave Branco and I arrived at Mount Robson’s Visitor Centre. There we met with BC parks’ Robin Draper, Cheryl Livingstone-Leman and Dan Adamson to prepare for the project, which presented some unusual logistical and technical challenges.

At first, the thought of shooting a ten-minute orientation video on the Berg Lake Trail meant hiking the entire 23 kilometres, making a stop somewhere in between to sleep for the night. There’s nothing unusual about that, except that in addition to packing our camping gear, we would have to carry our Video Camera, VTR Deck and Tripod. To some that might sound like an unattractive proposition, but to me it sounded like an adventure. Fortunately, however, it didn’t happen quite like that.

BC Parks graciously provided a cabin near the Visitor Centre that was by no means the Hilton, but it had a

LEFT: MICK HARPER, DAN ADAMSON, CHERYL LIVINGSTONE-LEMAN AND DAVE BRANCO (CAMERAMAN) HIKE TO FILMING LOCATION

Continued on page 7

FEBRUARY 1998
To Mr. Bob Austad  
South Vancouver Island District  

Re:  Marine Park Host Program  
Volunteer Recognition  

We were most honoured to be recognised for the ten years of volunteer service that RVYC members have given to the Marine Park Host Program.  

We are proud of our members who, over the years, have given this service to help preserve and protect the Marine Parks which are such an integral part of the marine environment in this area.  

On behalf of the Club and its members, we thank you for the beautiful print, Majestic Wing, by Marten Visser. We will attach a commemorative plaque and display it proudly in our Clubhouse.  

Yours truly,  

Dr. Jack Miller  
Commodore  
Royal Victoria Yacht Club  

---  

Federal Provincial Parks Management Course  
BY RON ROUTLEDGE, THOMPSON RIVER DISTRICT  

This fall, three of us from BC Parks (John Havelock, Seafor Jack and myself) were selected to join sixteen of our colleagues from across Canada, plus one from the state of Montana to share experiences, discuss, and learn about approaches to managing areas set aside as parks. Held in Hinton, Alberta, and coordinated by Andy Nowicki, District Manager for the Red Deer River District (Alberta Parks), this course is sponsored by the Federal-Provincial Parks Council. Canadian participants represented the Yukon plus every province except Prince Edward Island. Similarly, resource personnel also came from across the country and included Directors, Managers and Superintendents. Cheryl Livingstone-Leman, Wayne Stetski, Rick Heathman and Wayne van Velzen (all from BC Parks) played major roles in this regard. This year’s course was special in two ways: first, it marked a change in the name and emphasis of the course (formerly known as the Park Officer’s Course) to reflect the changes which have occurred in all park agencies, and second, this was its 25th Anniversary.  

Lasting for two weeks, the course was divided into three sessions—two classroom segments and a field trip. For the field trip portion, we starting by driving through a blizzard (mid-September in central Alberta!?) to reach Red Deer. The field trip lasted four days and saw us visiting six parks. At each park we were given a “behind the scenes” look at some of the key management issues or concerns presented by staff, contractors or volunteers who were directly dealing with them. That was followed by small group discussions (usually on the bus as we travelled to the next stop) focused on questions specific to the park or site we had just seen. Total involvement of the private sector (Aspen Beach Park), management of near-urban parks (Fish Creek Park), expectations placed on World Heritage Sites (Dinosaur and Mt. Robson Parks), and the multifaceted pressures of public use demands (Kananaskis Country and Banff) were well demonstrated. Add to that the overall context we all face of shrinking personnel and financial resources, and you can imagine that our discussions were very relevant to what is happening throughout the BC Parks System.  

For anyone with an interest in management of parks and wishing an opportunity to establish a networking system with others throughout this country, I would highly recommend applying for this course. It is not all work, but I have been sworn to secrecy by other volleyball players and hot-tub enthusiasts.
Setting Priorities
Five Districts Tackle a New Approach Using Levels of Management
BY ALICE MACGILLIVRAY, PARKS & ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MGMT. BRANCH

In last year’s budget instructions, BC Parks District Managers were given the daunting task of “managing each protected area as part of a single system.” After discussing the realities they faced, they asked for more specific direction. How—as an agency—do we want to proceed from the small, efficiently-run park system of the past to a much larger and more diverse system with fewer resources for management?

This is the basic question behind the “levels of management” project which has just undergone its first major test in districts. The project’s objectives are to set management targets for each park and ecological reserve; measure progress towards those targets; assist in reallocating resources within the system; set priorities for our work with others, and explain clearly what we cannot do.

One of the team’s most important tasks was to decide what should guide our long-term priorities. Three cornerstones were approved: 1) How significant are the values? 2) How threatened are the values? and 3) What other factors are important, such as public expectations, demographic trends, and public safety issues.

We were asked to build a system to classify each protected area and its recreation and conservation attributes on a priority 1-4 scale, depending on the relative significance of their values, threats and issues. This classification system would allow us to assess gaps between current and target levels in many different ways, for example, by park characteristics (e.g., important travel corridor parks); by district; by program area or by type of task. This database will help us to answer questions and explore options such as:

- Highlight protected areas with rare, threatened natural values, and which require biophysical inventory work in submissions for special funding.
- Move all “recreation level 4” parks with a gap greater than one up one level, where possible, through seeking third-party involvement and assistance overall.

As part of meeting agency objectives, we wanted the process to work well for districts. One key decision was to have the management levels information used in the annual park management planning (AMP) process. Several staff have said that “this takes more time than our old AMPs, but it’s a time-saver in other ways.”

“Most sections of the new document should remain quite stable. Unless we get new information, we’ll only need a quick review of the background and targets each year.” “The targets really replace a lot of the ‘wish-list’ work we used to do. Now we can refer to those long-term objectives, and include a practical one-year list of strategies.”

Several area supervisors have said that they like having the whole district team discuss each protected area and leave the room on the same wavelength. There were smiles and nods around the table as one area supervisor explained: “we used to draftAMPs independently, then come into these reactive meetings where we’d debate what was written then go back to the drawing board. This is a much more systematic and positive approach.”

Some officers and managers have commented that this process will make subsequent management planning work more efficient and less costly.

Recent district testing will be the basis of more discussions and refinements this winter. In the long term, if the project is successful, we will be able to see progress towards budgeting, staff allocation and partnerships based on protection of the most significant values and management of the most important issues.

Staff are encouraged to call team members with questions:

Bob Dalziel
Alice MacGillivray
Ron Routledge
Brian Carruthers
Rik Simmons
Drew Carmichael
Jeanne Wutzke
Mona Holley
Marty Roberts
Rick Kool
George Hyne

The team will take recommendations to the Park Management Committee in about two months, after which we can expect the resulting reports to be available for broader circulation.

Management Profile: Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park

The “management profile” of one of our newer parks, meant to give a quick visual picture of current effort, targets, and the gaps between the two. Effort is still needed for “foundation” tasks such as management planning, risk assessments and inventories. More effort is needed annually in this park for management of natural values than for recreation use and appreciation.
We've Come Along Way, Baby, But Sometimes It Doesn't Seem Like It.

I have been in Parks Headquarters since March of 1997 and have found that one of my more challenging job duties as a Recreation Officer is managing the provincial park uniform, including volunteer and Park Facility Operator uniforms. Fortunately I have the privilege of working with some knowledgeable and enthusiastic members on the Uniform Management Team: Gary Glinz, Len Robbins, Ron Harris and Chris Tunnock. These people reflect the esprit de corps of BC Parks, and bring with them practical experience from different geographical regions of BC.

Past and present members have contributed their expertise to a number of positive changes to the uniform. Highlights include:

- A new shoulder flash.
- Women's sizing (let me offer a biased "yay").
- Ordering procedures that are simple with a relatively quick turn around time.
- A good supplier (Product Distribution Branch) with expertise in uniform manufacturing.
- Good quality gortex coat and fleece.
- Pants made of espitwill that are more suited to a parks environment.
- Safety and security items.
- New volunteer uniform.
- Process for staff input and involvement.
- Policy, although still draft at this point.

The challenge of being on the uniform management team comes into play when we try to balance any change to the existing uniform with cost, quality, majority of people using the item, durability, safety and image. Everyone has an opinion on the clothes they wear, and often have suggestions on how to improve the item in question. If you do have any comments, please send them to the uniform management team in the format suggested in the policy on page 6, 1.4. Although we only meet once a year, we do have conference calls every two months or as needed.

A few of our goals for 1998 include working with Operation Officers to finalize the uniform policy and to improve the Park Facility Operator uniform. Also, the chairing of the team will be turned over to field staff in the new fiscal. Announcement of the new chair coming soon!

---

Park Facility Operator Uniforms

During the fall of 1997, the Uniform Management Team forwarded a uniform survey questionnaire to a target number of 33 Park Facility Operators from around the province. Operation Officers were tasked to distributing the surveys to the Park Facility Operators, and returning them to Len Robbins. Out of the 33 questionnaires there were 21 returned with excellent comments.

The questionnaire focussed on the following topic areas:

- Ordering availability.
- Recommended changes.
- Current uniform (function and suitability).
- Quality.
- Style, color.
- Cost.

Using the results from the surveys, the Uniform Management Team will be working with the supplier to work towards improving the Park Facility Operator uniforms. Thank you to all Park Facility Operators who took the time to fill out and return the surveys!

---

Coffee fans take note

THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTS THIS IS MAKING THE ROUNDS ON THE NET.

You know you're drinking too much coffee when: you haven't blinked since the last lunar eclipse; you grind your coffee beans in your mouth; you can jump-start your car without cables; you don't need a hammer to pound in nails; your only source of nutrition comes from Sweet 'N Low; you don't unwrap candy bars before eating them; your life's goal is to amount to a hill of beans.
Protecting Mara Meadows
BY BRUCE PETCH, THOMPSON RIVER DISTRICT

Nestled in the hills just east of Salmon Arm is a small Ecological Reserve called Mara Meadows. It is inconspicuous, and to casual observers, just a marsh that might as well be an ecological reserve because it isn’t useful for anything else. In fact it is (in part) a calcareous fen (a wetland with abundant sedges, and rich in calcium carbonate), and is unique in the province. Comprised of less than 200 hectares, the Reserve is home to many rare plants (notably orchids), including three red-listed and two blue-listed species.

In the late 1960s or early 1970s some enterprising individuals attempted to drain the Meadows, perhaps to allow harvesting of peat (which, ironically, is not abundant there). Efforts by a number of groups—especially the North Okanagan Naturalists Club—resulted in the construction of weirs and small dams to keep the water in place. This group’s concerns led to the creation of the Ecological Reserve. While intrusions into the Meadows have not been a serious problem since then, concerns over the impacts of water diversion upstream and forestry activities have been ongoing.

The water diversion issue came to a head in December when a hearing was held pursuant to the District of Salmon Arm’s appeal of a Water Management decision to refuse their water licence application in the headwaters of Violet Creek, believed to be one of the main water sources for Mara Meadows. BC Parks Thompson River District took the hearing seriously—a law firm was retained to ensure that our case was presented as strongly as possible. As witnesses we had a remarkable group of people—Hans Roemer, Vegetation Ecologist for BC Parks; Malcolm Martin, a self-taught botanist and the person most knowledgeable of the ecology of Mara Meadows; and Peter Bailey, the Volunteer Warden for the Ecological Reserve. Resource Officer Bob Scheer and I coordinated BC Parks input.

Now plans are being made for road construction and harvesting in a woodlot that lies to the west of the Reserve. BC Parks, BC Environment, the Ministry of Forests, naturalists clubs and concerned citizens are all involved in discussions to ensure that undesirable impacts on the Meadows are avoided.

Before you plan any bus tours to visit Mara Meadows, please note that it is closed to entry except by permit. The orchids and other rare plants are fragile and could be easily damaged by trampling.
Jack Meet Jack
BY RAY PETERSON
LOWER MAINLAND DISTRICT

Someone named Jack willed this photo to disappear last April after an all staff meeting in the newly formed Lower Mainland District.

This role of film mysteriously reappeared and you can see by the laughter on the Park Ranger faces that this is one good looking donkey!

It appears that both our Horse Concessionaire at Golden Ears Park and my new boss, Jack Hall have a great sense of humour.

A Rare Find
BY ELLEN FERGUSON
THOMPSON RIVER DISTRICT

A fascinating old Wells Gray Park brochure has surfaced, found in a packet of black and white photos that had belonged to the late Les Cook, supervisor of Wells Gray in the 1950s. There’s no printing date, but lithograph credits read “Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty.”

The map layout was designed by Ches Lyons, perhaps best known for his Trees, Shrubs & Flowers To Know In B.C. CP Lyons was one of the very first BC Parks staff, in the days when we weren’t even a “branch,” but merely a “section” of the BC Forest Branch!

The road went only as far the Mushbowl on the Murtle River in those days, followed by “17 miles good horse trail” to Clearwater Lake. Wouldn’t that slow down the monster motorhomes and 5th-wheel traffic?

It’s fascinating to note the many changes. A number of the “good” trails shown on this map are now so completely grown in as to be almost impossible to find, while trails designated as “poor” in the 1940s are now some of our best and most enjoyed.

Other things haven’t changed at all—we may not be the Primitive Wonderland of the 1940s, but our waterfalls are still every bit as spectacular, the geological features as striking, and the fishing (almost) as good. And yes, the north end of the Park can still be described as “unexplored peaks and glaciers.”

There have now been 20 very successful Legacy Project Open Houses around the province and at least 15 more are planned in the next couple of months. The project is now ready to embark on the second phase of public consultation, a series of workshops with interested groups and individuals around B.C. A variety of consultation methods have also been established, including a questionnaire and a website with an email response forum (www.parklegacy.bc.ca). A self-directed workshop kit is also being developed and will be available through the Legacy Project Office on request.

Discussion will be based on five broad themes: vision, planning, management, resourcing, and public involvement. Some of the questions to be explored are: What is your vision for our parks system? How can park planning processes be improved to create quality management plans for all protected areas? How can the management of protected areas be improved to ensure continued use by the public while preserving the ecological values of parks? What major opportunities to diversify the sources of support for ongoing protected areas operations should be explored? What should be done to encourage broader and more effective public involvement in stewardship of protected areas?

The Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks, Cathy McGregor, recently appointed a new member to the Legacy Project Panel, Jennifer Goodman, who will be representing and promoting youth input in the process. Jennifer will be working with schools and youth groups around the province and is currently developing an essay contest for high school and post-secondary students.

The importance of Legacy Project initiatives to British Columbians is obvious by the high level of interest and participation in Legacy Project events throughout the province. With the continued support of B.C. residents and BC Parks staff, there can be no doubt that BC is well on the way to creating a publicly driven, community based vision for the provincial park system.

To submit your comments or ideas please write to the Legacy Project Office, PO BOX 3760 Station CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 3Y6, or fax (250) 952-6235. For more information on BC’s Park Legacy Project and to find out about upcoming events, please contact the Legacy Project Office at (250) 387-1968 or contact our web site at www.parklegacy.bc.ca.