



the Wetlander

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

FALL/WINTER 2008



Our Mission

We exist to manage the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, a 17,000 acre wetland of international significance, for conservation and natural species diversity through active habitat and wildlife management, research, education and public support.

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CVWMA Mandate Review

We caught the attention of the provincial government last spring regarding issues related to the legislation (the Creston Valley Wildlife Act created in 1968 and now outdated), governance and financial structure of the CVWMA. As a result, a mandate review was initiated by the Honourable Barry Penner, BC Minister of Environment.

This mandate review is under the direction of the Crown Agencies Secretariat, led by the Parks Branch of the Ministry of Environment, and follows specific guidelines set out by the Ministry of Finance.

The review, which is a significant and resource intensive undertaking, will examine in detail the operations and current financial situation of the CVWMA. The process will culminate with several options and their implications for the consideration of cabinet.

The mandate review is now underway and scheduled to be completed and options submitted to cabinet sometime in December. It's hoped that the document will get onto

the cabinet agenda early in the new year.

Whatever option cabinet chooses will require legislative changes to our current Act. Because of a full legislative agenda and an upcoming provincial election, it's unlikely that this will occur before the spring of 2010. This means that a two year transition period will be required before the necessary legislation can be put into place.

The CVWMA is actively involved in the mandate review process through the direct participation of our CEO and Authority members. Notwithstanding this participation, the final cabinet document will not be available to anyone except cabinet, and, of course, the final decision will rest with the provincial cabinet.

We, like you, anxiously await the outcome of the mandate review. We are excited with the process, and hope that the outcome will give us a more stable and clear future direction from which to proceed. It is business as usual while we wait for the process to unfold.

The **BC Ministry of Environment** recognizes that "wetlands provide for commercial and recreational use of wetland-dependent fish and shellfish, enhance agricultural productivity, and support a variety of scientific, educational and recreational opportunities."

The government also states that "**action is required to help reduce wetland losses and provide for coordinated conservation and management efforts.**"

When it comes to the protection and management of a large wetland habitat like the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, we hope that the government will live up to its commitments and provide the critical resources necessary to keep this wetland alive.

Show your support for the CVWMA and its wildlife by writing letters to the Honourable Barry Penner, BC Minister of Environment.

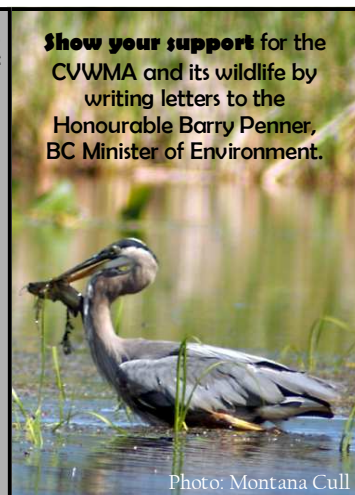


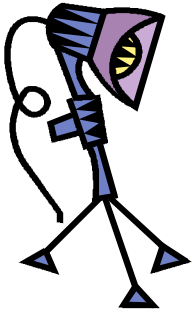
Photo: Montana Cull



Send questions and comments to...wetlander@crestonwildlife.ca



Donors in the Spotlight...



"Donors in the Spotlight" is a series in the Wetlander that highlights one of our donors in each issue. This time, let's hear from the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund!

The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) is proud to be among the supporters of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area. With an international reputation (and a Ramsar designation) highlighting the importance of this critical habitat area for fish and wildlife, the CVWMA is one of the jewels in the crown of conservation in British Columbia.

It was over 20 years ago that the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation made its first investment in the CVWMA (\$10,000 to assist with the development of the Interpretative Centre) and since that time, through a variety of projects, HCTF has directly invested over \$200,000 in various projects to support CVWMA operations. As well, through our annual contribution of \$250,000 to Ducks Unlimited, we continue to support the management and enhancement of wetlands across BC, and some of this annual funding goes to management activities at the CVWMA.

Ramsar, IBA, IMPARA...What do they mean?

With both international and national recognitions, the CVWMA is honoured to carry the following designations:



Ramsar site: designated a wetland of international importance.

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 158 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1822 wetland sites, totaling 168 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.



Important Bird Area (IBA) of Canada

Canada's IBA Program is a science-based initiative to identify,

"It is important to remember that the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation gets the majority of its income from the anglers, hunters, guide-outfitters and trappers of British Columbia", said HCTF Board Chair Harvey Andrusak. "Since 1981, HCTF has invested over \$100 million in conservation projects across BC, using funds provided by those contributors. Those same contributors recognize the importance of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, and that's one of the reasons we have supported conservation projects at the CVWMA for the past 20 years."

"The fact is, wetlands and other critical habitats are under pressure and being lost across BC. Conservation of species and habitats is everyone's business, and the Board, staff and supporters of the CVWMA are to be commended for their efforts. HCTF has been a longtime supporter, especially in time of need at the CVWMA and given our joint interest in conservation, I am confident we will continue to be partners well into the future."

For more information, please contact:
 Brian Springinotic, Executive Director
 Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
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 Fax: (250) 952-6684
 Website: www.hctf.ca



conserve and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for Canada's bird populations.

The wetland of the CVWMA is located along the Pacific Flyway and over 286 species of birds have been recorded to date in the Valley. In the spring and fall, Tundra Swan numbers can reach in the thousands. We have 1 of 3 known breeding colonies of Western Grebes in BC, the only breeding location for Forster's Terns in BC, and the largest Great Blue Heron colony in BC, outside of the Coast.



Important Reptile and Amphibian Area (IMPARA) through the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network (CARCN)

The CVWMA is home to 6 species of reptiles and 6 species of amphibians, including the endangered Leopard Frog. The Western Painted Turtle, a year round resident here in the wetland, is blue listed provincially and of special concern federally.

The Wetland Team

Richard L. Dalon—Chief Executive Officer

Marc-André Beaucher—Area Manager and Chief Biologist

Anne de Jager—Director of Development and Executive Assistant to CEO

Gillian Cooper—Director of Education and Interpretation Centre

Carla Haegele—Stewardship, Communications & Special Projects Manager

Angela Hoover—Office Administrator

Angela started with the CVWMA this August and she immediately became a valuable member to the team. We are enjoying her wonderful organizational skills, attention to detail and great personality. Angela grew up in Creston and recently moved back here from Victoria. Welcome!



From left: Angela, Marc-André, Richard, Gillian, Anne and Carla

The Leech Lake Gate Affair

From Marc-André Beaucher

Infrastructure upgrades continued in the fall of 2008. Two existing deteriorated water controls, known as gatewells, were replaced with completely new structures. Control 4 in Corn Creek, a “single slide-gate” structure was replaced from mid to late September; control 5 in Leach Lake, a “3-way” structure, was replaced from early to mid October.

The two old structures, made of galvanized metal, were leaking and the slide gates were falling off their guides regularly. The new structures are now made of concrete and connected to the ponds with high-

density polyethylene (HDPE). These new controls are expected to last for more than 50 years, doubling the life expectancy of the old ones.

Construction, materials, and labour costs have not been compiled yet, but estimates for control 4 in Corn Creek and control 5 in Leach Lake will be around \$45,000 and \$100,000, respectively. Grants, cash, and in-kind contributions from the Columbia Basin Trust, the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, the Flair Foundation, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and Wildlife Habitat Canada made this work possible.



The old 3-way gatewell in Leach Lake is on the left. The new 3-way gatewell, installed in October, is on the right.

Wildlife Interpretation Centre

Welcome!

The Interpretation Centre hosted close to 7,000 visitors this season from May to October. Our hour long guided canoe tours were very popular with 1,659 people paddling their way through the wetland. Our elementary school programs, which includes the Bug Show, Classroom with Outdoors and Nocturnal Adventures Sleepovers, and high school stewardship program saw 1,734 students involved in hands-on environmental education. Over 700 people were involved in our science and nature programs such as the Jr. Naturalists, Mallard Mornings, Father's Day Sleepover and Herb Walks, to name a few.

Helping our Visitors Find Their Way...

ISL and Two Nation Birding Vacation

Visitors traveling along the International Selkirk Loop (ISL), a scenic byway encircling the spectacular Selkirk mountains in northeast Washington, northern Idaho and southeastern BC, checked out the Wildlife Interpretation Centre, one of many destination points along the Loop. The ISL was named a 2009 Rand McNally Best of the Road attraction with the CVWMA as one of the Editor's top picks along the route.



The Two Nation Birding Vacation, a self-drive vacation tour, follows the ISL and explores over 20 spectacular bird watching areas within the Pacific Flyway, including the CVWMA, the only Ramsar site on the tour. Visitors enjoyed receiving the tour guide book that highlights the various bird species found along the way.

Event Highlights

Y2Y Conference

The Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative is a joint Canadian-US network of over 300 organizations, institutions, foundations, and conservation-minded individuals who have recognized the value of working together to restore and maintain the unique natural heritage of the Yellowstone to Yukon region and the quality of life it offers. In mid October, delegates from this organization held a 2-day conference at the Interpretation Centre. For more information on the organization visit www.y2y.net.

Program Snapshots...

Enjoy a Day at the Spa

Face the world with glowing skin and silky hair, all thanks to nature! The Pathfinder Guides of Cranbrook enjoyed a "Spa Walk" this September. Gillian showed them how to deep condition their hair and treat their skin to a revitalizing mud mask, all thanks to the properties of wetland plants and processes.

Mud Masks...

Smoothing on various forms of wet earth to the skin has been found to have fabulous results – by stimulating circulation, exfoliating dead skin cells, deep cleansing and removing impurities, the skin is left renewed and revitalized!



"We did the mud facials on Monday night and the girls LOVED it! Thanks for bringing laughter, knowledge, purpose and fun into our world of guiding." Guider Maggie



Eco Hair Conditioner Recipe

(enough for 2 heads)

2 cups fresh horsetail (above ground part)
2 cups water

Combine ingredients in saucepan and gently boil for around 20 minutes, until soft. Add mixture to blender and puree. You may need to add or take away water so that it blends smoothly.

Once cool, apply to damp hair and let sit for 5 minutes. Thoroughly rinse conditioner out and you are ready to go!

Double duty. Start with 4 cups of water instead of two and reserve most of the liquid to drink as a tea. Horsetail is known for its medicinal properties and can be used to treat a sore throat.

Who's Awake? Me too!



Have you ever been out in the wilds as the sun sets, the moon rises and the night creatures emerge? It's a delight of sounds and shadows as nocturnal creatures prowl the area. But you haven't heard anything until you are out with a class of 30 Grade 5's as bats swoop, owls hoot and girls "ohh and ahh". It's all great fun as the students learn how to observe and appreciate nature at night. The Nocturnal Adventures Sleepover Program at the Interpretation Centre was back into full swing this year after a 3-year hiatus while the Centre was repaired. Call us to book your class for next spring!

Ecosystem Services

Humankind benefits from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by natural ecosystems. Collectively, these benefits are known as Ecosystem or Nature's Services (known as Ecosystem Services hereafter).

Ecosystem Services are distinct from other ecosystem products and functions because there is human demand for these natural assets. Three general categories of services and benefits of healthy ecosystems are: providing critical life support activities such as purifying and filtering water and air, recycling wastes and stabilizing climate; producing valuable goods including timber, fibers, fish, medicines and fuels; and providing valuable support services that grow food plants, control pests and diseases, moderate weather, create recreational opportunities, aesthetic setting and spiritual retreat.

The concept of naming and valuing Ecosystem Services has caught the interest of economists and ecologists; imagine trying to place a dollar value on the things that we get from nature that sustain human life for free. Imagine not valuing these things and assuming that they will always be there.

Wetlands provide crucial Ecosystem Services, including filtering and conserving water, flood control, and shelter and food for fish and wildlife. Wetlands also help maintain cycles essential for life on earth, such as the carbon, methane, nitrogen, and sulfur cycles. Resource managers

now realize that preservation and restoration of wetlands and natural waterways may be a more cost effective means of maintaining drinking water quality than expensive water treatment technologies.

How much would you pay to save a local wetland or a piece of tropical forest? How much would your neighbor pay? It's not easy to put a price tag on ecosystems or their services. It's important, however, to understand the value of a natural resource if it's to be preserved, continue functioning and effectively provide Ecosystem Services.

Environmental economists have used various methods to estimate the economic market and non-market values of the goods and services of various ecosystems. For wetlands, the total value is estimated to be \$19,580 hectare/year (1994 US\$). Using this figure to estimate the goods and services value of wetlands, British Columbia's total wetland surface area of 5.28 million hectares would yield a potential value of over \$100 billion/year. At a local level, the CVWMA would yield a potential goods and services value to society of \$1.39 million/year.

Ecosystem Services provided by freshwater wetlands:

- ◆ Water treatment and purification
- ◆ Water supply for drinking, irrigation, thermoelectric production and aquaculture
- ◆ Filter and conserve water
- ◆ Flood control
- ◆ Shelter and food for fish and wildlife
- ◆ Maintain carbon, methane, nitrogen and sulphur cycles
- ◆ Recreational opportunities
- ◆ Wildlife habitat for hunting, viewing and photographing
- ◆ Produces waterfowl for sport hunting
- ◆ Rear insects responsible for pollination
- ◆ Natural pest control
- ◆ Nursery for fish

Quiz... A Wetland Engineer!

Beavers are the largest rodent in the world.
a true b false



Of all the senses, which one does the beaver rely on the least?
a hearing b smell c touch d sight

Beaver fur has how many hairs per cm²?
a 1–3,000 b 5–10,000 c 12–23,000 d 25–32,000

A beaver's ability to change the landscape is second only to which other mammal?
a humans b gorillas c pandas d coyotes

On what Canadian coin will you find the beaver?
a 5 cent b 10 cent c 25 cent d 2 dollar

A group of beavers is known as a _____?
a squad b mob c colony d troop

BC River's Day Paddle, September 28



Paddlers (12 boats) from the Columbia Canoe Club and local community celebrated the day on the waters of the wetland.

Wildlife Moments



Photo: Marc-André Beaucher

This Northern Hawk Owl was seen south of Wynndel along Hwy 3A on November 15, 2008

The Answers... to the Quiz (page 5)

The beaver is the second largest rodent in the world after the South American capibara. The beaver is more closely related to squirrels and marmots than to mouse-like rodents.

Beavers have poor eyesight, but a keen sense of hearing, smell and touch. The sense organs on a beaver are aligned in a row so that beavers swim with their nostrils, eyes and ears raised above the waterline while the rest of the head and body are submerged. Their sense of smell is acute and is extremely important in social communication as they rely on chemical cues from scent marks that they leave on mud mounds. Beavers also use auditory signals such as tail slaps, whining and hissing to communicate.

The beaver fur consists of two types of hair – the long coarse guard hairs and the soft wool hair of the underfur that rests close to the skin. It is that layer of wool hair that keeps the beaver warm. The fur is extremely dense with 12–23,000 hairs per cm². This dense layer of fur acts as a warm overcoat, as a raincoat when under water, as a lifejacket to keep the beaver afloat and as protection against the teeth and claws of enemies. Sea Otters have the densest fur of any mammal varying from 26–165,000 hairs per cm² depending on the location of the fur on the body.

Next to humans, no other extant (still existing) animal appears to do more to shape its landscape. Beavers profoundly affect their ecosystem by damming water and removing trees. The stored water and raised water table can be important for many plants and animals, especially during droughts. As beavers open up forest along streams, they create new landscapes, such as ponds, swamps and meadows. The new landscape invites a myriad of plants and animals to move in and form a complex community structure.

The beaver graces our 5 cent coin!

A group of beavers is known as a colony.

Support the CVWMA, Donate Now!

At this time of year, we ask you to open your hearts for wildlife. Please help us conserve this wetland for wildlife and as a legacy for future generations. Take a moment to read the enclosed letter. You can support our living classrooms programs and critical habitat management through a one time or monthly donation.

As a monthly giver, you offer a reliable source of funds so that the CVWMA can focus on habitat management and environmental education. Even modest monthly contributions, which are easier to budget for, can make a considerable difference over time. You determine the amount and we will charge your credit card on the 1st or 15th of the month. It's that easy!

Please look over the enclosed letter to see how you can make a difference.

Wetlands on the Web

Check out the full scoop on the BC Ministry of Environment's stand on the importance of wetlands...
www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/wetlands.html



Check out the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Region, for some interesting info on putting economic value on wetlands...
www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/factsheets/fs_wetlands-e.html

Obviously, both governments agree on the importance of wetland habitats. Write a letter to the Honourable Barry Penner, BC Minister of Environment and the Honourable Jim Prentice, Federal Minister of the Environment and let them know you want them to invest in the CVWMA and provide the critical resources necessary to keep this wetland alive!



Reach us at:

CVWMA

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Email: askus@crestonwildlife.ca

Website: www.crestonwildlife.ca



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