

## RESOLUTION MANUAL 2006 - 2022

### Introduction

BC Nature (BCN) is a family of naturalist clubs whose twin goals are voiced in our motto:

**“To know nature and keep it worth knowing”**

The goals of education and conservation are inextricably bound to one another, as further explained in our four objectives:

- 1) To provide naturalists and natural history clubs of British Columbia with a unified voice on conservation and environmental issues.
- 2) To foster an awareness, appreciation and understanding of our natural environment, that it may be wisely used and maintained for future generations.
- 3) To encourage the formation and cooperation of natural history clubs throughout British Columbia.
- 4) To provide a means of communication between naturalists in British Columbia.

BCN believes that negotiation, cooperation and consensus are ways to build a lasting conservation strategy in British Columbia. Through partnerships with other organizations and governments we strive to further conservation and natural history education in the province of British Columbia. We will, however, petition government at all levels to achieve our goals.

Specific policy comes from the resolutions that BCN passes at Annual General Meetings, and occasionally at a Fall General Meeting or Executive Meeting. This Resolution recap covers the fourteen year period from, and including, 2006-2020. Three previous Manuals were previously compiled, *Resolution Manual 1979-1988*, *Resolutions 1988-1994*, and *Resolutions 1995-2005*.

### How to Read the Manual

The resolutions presented are in the original format as presented to the general membership at the AGM or FGM. In a few instances for clarity, a passage from the ‘**WHEREAS**’ statement or other background information has been included in italics

The resolutions are presented in a chronological listing year by year. Each is given a number at its end, starting with the last two digits of the year in which it was passed. For example resolution number 00-03, is from the year 2000, and is number 3 from that year.

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**Resolution 2022-01 - Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement**

**Submitted by Nature Chilliwack**

**Resolution 2006-01. Spotted Owl Habitat** - Submitted by Lillooet Naturalist Society, approved May 6, 2006

**WHEREAS** the Lillooet Naturalist Society and the Federation of BC Naturalists have made requests since 2002 to the various provincial ministries for protection of habitat of the endangered northern Spotted Owl, and

**WHEREAS** in spite of numerous studies, recommendations and warnings by experts, scientists, government biologists and panels, the government has failed to act to protect the habitat of the endangered northern Spotted Owl in BC, and this has contributed to the owls' decline and imminent extirpation, and

**WHEREAS** sadly only 22 spotted owls were known to exist in BC at the end of 2005 (6 pairs and 10 lone birds), and

**WHEREAS** with full knowledge of the consequences of destroying critical habitat through logging, the provincial government continued to permit logging of old growth forest and failed to consider the survival of the northern Spotted Owl and other flora and fauna dependent on this old growth habitat, and

**WHEREAS** recognizing that the Spotted Owl is considered an indicator species for a healthy old growth forest ecosystem, and that protection of the remaining old growth habitat has value for many species, not just the northern Spotted Owl, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the provincial government to protect old growth forest habitat in consideration of Species At Risk and protect sufficient suitable habitat to allow for Spotted Owl recovery and the survival of other old growth dependent species, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists submit a resolution to Nature Canada urging them to take action on this issue with Environment Canada and to support the legal proceedings initiated by several environmental groups to compel government to order protections for the Owl and protect the habitat for the endangered northern Spotted Owl, under Canada's Species at Risk Act, SARA.

**Resolution 2006-02. Cathedral Grove By-Pass Road** - Submitted by Arrowsmith Naturalists Club, **Tabled** May 6, 2006

*With respect to the following resolution, the Minister of Environment announced on April 6<sup>th</sup> that government is withdrawing plans for the parking lots. Therefore the Arrowsmith Naturalists Club has asked that this resolution be tabled, and that FBCN write the Minister of Environment as follows:*

Dear Minister Penner:

The Federation of BC Naturalists is very pleased to learn of government's decision to use traffic calming measures at Cathedral Grove (MacMillan Provincial Park) and to not clear any more parkland for parking lots. We believe the long term solution for traffic congestion is to reroute Highway #4 around the park. A bypass route could be located on the already logged Crown land adjacent to the park and we will be writing the Highways Minister with this suggestion.

Letter to Highways Minister would provide suggested location for rerouting the highway:

Remove the "S" bends and have a long bridge over the Cameron River. A bonus to this idea would be free wildlife migration under the bridge. Then, take the highway around the south side of the Park and join again somewhere along the shore of Cameron Lake or before. Cut the road off on the Port Alberni end so that it would no longer be a

"thru" road. The present highway then becomes a very long parking lot with many pullout spots for people to stop and walk. Getting the highway away from the lake could prevent disaster in event of any kind of a spill in Cameron Lake. This would provide a much-improved highway for Port Alberni and points West. It would leave the old highway and associated logging roads through Cathedral Grove for parking and info-centre.

### **Background**

For many years there has been an ongoing debate over the road to Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island. This road – Highway 4 - is also the only road to Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet and Pacific Rim National Park and results in a heavily trafficked and congested road. Without doing a traffic study, the provincial government has attempted to address the safety and congestion issues by planning to put in a large parking lot for approximately 130 cars and 15 buses in Cathedral Grove. A public outcry and protests led to a public forum last fall where BC Parks presented additional options placing parking spaces at different locations within the park. They presented pros and cons for each option and concluded that they still intend to proceed with their plan for the original parking lot. Apparently this is to improve safety although an informal volunteer survey showed that the majority of grove visitors stop on the way from the east coast going to the west coast. The proposed parking lot will thus require two left hand turns crossing oncoming traffic – one to enter the lots and one to continue westward on their journey.

The only viable long-term solution to address congestion issues and maintain the integrity of the park is by building a by-pass road allowing non-visiting vehicles a safer, faster journey. The route into the Grove can then see reduced traffic flow, slower speeds, more efficient use of the already wide lanes and present parking and, importantly, provide better protection for the park environment.

**WHEREAS** BC Parks plans to remove several old growth trees for the proposed parking lot in Cathedral Grove Park, although there is less than 1% of old growth, particularly low elevation, Douglas Fir forest remaining on Vancouver Island, and

**WHEREAS** BC Parks plans to also remove maturing, second growth trees which will create a permanent wind funnel upwind of the park and result in further blowdown of old growth trees, and

**WHEREAS** BC Parks has not carried out a Fish Habitat Assessment in the park although fish spawning streams are within the proximity all of the proposed lots, and

**WHEREAS** the proposed parking lot area is in the Cameron River floodplain and in January 2005 was underneath four feet of water for a significant length of time, and

**WHEREAS** the proposed parking lot is in prime blue-listed Roosevelt Elk habitat and should be left undisturbed, and

**WHEREAS** due to the growing populations of Port Alberni, Tofino and Ucluelet, increased commercial traffic and the already more than two million tourists per year overload the narrow two-lane road, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Ministries of the Environment and Transportation to:

- cease planning more parking lots within Cathedral Grove, and
- re-route Highway 4 by moving it onto the nearby, extensively logged slopes bypassing Cathedral Grove.

**Resolution 2006-03. Legislation for Southern Interior Parks** - Submitted by Thompson-Shuswap-

*Okanagan Regional Directors; Approved May 6, 2006*

**WHEREAS** the Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resources Management Plan (LRMP) approved the following seven large Protected Areas, which have not yet been legislated:

Anarchist Mt.	467 hectares
Brent Mountain	4,344 hectares
Cathedral Lakes (addition)	353 hectares
Snowy Alpine	25,654 hectares
South Okanagan Grasslands	9,364 hectares
Vaseux	2,015 hectares
White Lake Grasslands	3,726 hectares

In addition the following eight Goal 2 areas (smaller protected areas) have no level of protection at this time beyond having 'no mineral staking' reserves placed on them:

Anarchist Larch	278 hectares
Isintok Lake	126 hectares
Naramata Creek	101 hectares
Oliver Mountain	356 hectares
Shuttleworth Creek Larch	102 hectares
Similkameen Cottonwoods	18 hectares
Similkameen River	12 hectares
Skaha Bluffs	144 hectares

**WHEREAS** Bill 50 legislating the government-approved Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resources Management Plan (LRMP) was passed in 2004, and

**WHEREAS** a number of Protected Areas (listed above) included in the LRMP to be legislated either as Class A Parks or under other protected area categories, were omitted from the legislation, and

**WHEREAS** no provision for future inclusion of these Protected Areas was made under the legislation, leaving the larger areas vulnerable to boundary changes and the smaller Goal 2 areas with little protection beyond that of Crown land, and

**WHEREAS** even if these areas were to eventually be included in the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve proposal, designation in 2007 as Protected Areas would not preclude turning them over to national park status, but would provide them with immediate protection and management, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the government to have these areas, listed above, legislated as Class A Parks.

**Resolution 2006-04. Protect the Gilpin Grasslands** - Submitted by North Okanagan Naturalists' Club; approved May 6, 2006

**WHEREAS** the provincial and federal governments in 1972 purchased 3431 hectares of the Gilpin native grasslands (located between Grand Forks and Christina Lake) to ensure that critical winter habitat for wild ungulates would be protected and overgrazed grasslands would be rehabilitated; and

**WHEREAS** in 1990 the Gilpin Grasslands became a candidate for protected area status because lowelevation native grasslands in the BC Boundary region were under-represented; less than 0.025% of the PPdh1 sub-zone (Ponderosa Pine, dry hot, Kettle Valley) had Park or Protected Area status; and

**WHEREAS** in the early 1990s the Kootenay Boundary Commission on Resources and Environment recommended that Gilpin Grasslands become a Special Management Area to correct destructive livestock grazing, the encroachment of noxious weeds, impairment of riparian areas, and protection of the unique floral/faunal biodiversity; and

**WHEREAS** the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan in the mid 1990s recommended that up to 10,500 hectares be allocated for additional protected areas in the West Kootenays, following which the technical team identified several candidates, including two small potential Goal 2 Parks within the Gilpin Grasslands study area, namely the Gilpin Grasslands (about 800 hectares) and Boothman Oxbow (about 100 hectares), therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Government of British Columbia to protect and provide better management for the Gilpin Grasslands by:

- 1) immediately designating the two small proposed provincial parks, namely the Gilpin Grassland Park and the Boothman Oxbow Park, and,
- 2) quickly finalizing the proposal for the much larger Gilpin Grasslands Wildlife Management Area (estimated around 5000 hectares) for public review.

**Resolution 2006-05. Commercial Lodges in BC Parks - Submitted by Alouette Field Naturalists;**  
*Approved May 6, 2006*

**WHEREAS** one of the objectives of the FBCN is to "foster an awareness, appreciation and understanding of our natural environment, that it may be wisely used and maintained for future generations", and

**WHEREAS** the Provincial Parks of British Columbia are designated as environmental, inspirational and educational areas for the public, fostering an understanding and respect for the environment, and

**WHEREAS** Provincial Parks are a shared public trust not to be sold or privatized and, consequently commercial development is inappropriate within Park boundaries and should be located outside of Park boundaries, and

**WHEREAS** the policy of the present Provincial Government appears to be supporting the commercial development of 80 to 100 room lodges within Provincial Parks, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists write to the Minister of Environment expressing our opposition to new commercial development in BC Parks, including any new lodges.

**Resolution 2006-06. Roofed Accommodation in BC Parks - Submitted by Vancouver Natural History Society;**  
*Tabled May 6, 2006*

**WHEREAS** BC's provincial parks "are dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public" [Park Act, Section 5 (3)], and

**WHEREAS** the first two principles established by the 2002 Recreational Stewardship Panel were:

- 1) “The province’s fundamental obligation to conserve, protect and restore the natural population distributions and levels of fish, wildlife and their habitats, and to protect the ecological integrity of the parks of British Columbia, will guide the development and management of recreational opportunities,”
- 2) “Conservation, protection, restoration and enforcement are the responsibility of government and will be supported by general tax revenue,” and

**WHEREAS** funding for BC’s provincial parks is extremely low compared to park agencies in other jurisdictions, with concomitant declines in staffing, facility maintenance, and visitor services, and **WHEREAS** the Park Act was amended in 2003 (Section 9.1) to allow for the possibility of resort and tourism development, “if, in the minister’s opinion, the activity and the development are consistent with or complementary to the recreational values of the park involved,” and

**WHEREAS** the BC Government has developed a **Resort Policy** and the Ministry of Environment has established an advisory committee made up of invited representatives of non-government organizations to provide advice to BC Parks on a **Roofed Accommodation Strategy** to consider allowing an increased number of fixed roofed accommodations in designated BC provincial parks, and

**WHEREAS** no information has been provided to the public on the objectives of either the Resort Policy or the Roofed Accommodation Strategy, leading to widespread concern about the potential impact of such resort development on the ecological integrity of the affected parks, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Minister of Environment to adopt the above-mentioned first two principles presented by the Recreation Stewardship Panel and thereby show the province’s commitment to conserve, protect and restore natural populations and their habitats in BC Parks, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Minister of Environment to clearly and publicly define the objectives behind the Resort Policy and Roofed Accommodation Strategy, the range of scale the government is contemplating, and the types of ownership being considered for these lodges in parks, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Minister of Environment to first consider locating the accommodation facility outside the park boundary, even if the park’s management plan provides for the possibility of roofed accommodation within the park, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in the event that the government persists with plans for new fixed roofed accommodation within certain parks, the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Minister of Environment to:

- 1) not allow new commercial development within BC Parks, and
- 2) consider roofed accommodation for a park only if a management plan has been completed with public participation and agreement on the acceptability of such accommodation, and
- 3) for a park where a management plan has identified the possibility of roofed accommodation, ensure that the specific roofed accommodation proposal is publicly reviewed and discussed in an open, fair and transparent manner, including independent studies on environmental impact and socio-economic values, and that the public be fully involved.

**Resolution 2006-07. Declaration on Park Principles** - Submitted by Alouette Field Naturalists; Approved May 6, 2006

**Background Information:** Declaration on the Principles of Parks



At the turn of the previous century, amidst the rapid settlement of land, shooting of wildlife and cutting down of forests by settlers, there emerged a vision of preserving large areas of wildlands in their natural condition, with little or no modification by humans. Originally born out of the human response to scenic grandeur and wildlife, these areas are now the last refuges for many native species.

Today, scientists warn that major damage to ecosystems endangers life on this planet, including human life. Science recognizes that fully protected areas play a critical role in the survival of species. Ecologists urge that parks be kept as natural as possible, with natural ecological processes, because they are living textbooks on the science of ecosystem health.

Today, the dissonance and alienation of a troubled world, dominated by the pursuit of economic gain, encroach upon the peace and sanity of individuals and societies. Parks have become sanctuaries where the human spirit can refresh itself amidst the space, beauty, and solitude of a fully natural world. There, uninjured by industrial inroads, or the intrusions of entrepreneurial- or entertainment-based uses, nature - left undivided - teaches wholeness by the experience, itself.

These facts are the basis for the profound determination of the public - born of a sense of urgency, and asserted many times over the years - to create ample protected areas and to hold them sacred for the survival of species and for future generations of humanity.

There have always been those who claim that the purpose of parks is private economic gain. But these views misrepresent the higher human imperatives that have fought for parks, paid for them, and defended them for nearly 100 years.

Society spends many years, at great cost, weighing the economic values versus the preservation values of every park proposal. Each park represents a decision that preservation best serves the public interest. The value of living things, of their ecological life support system, of the human experience of nature and wilderness, must never again be weighed against the dollar in these sanctuaries.

We, the undersigned, wish all to know that the following tenets are the true principles that should guide park management:

1. Parks have a dual mandate: The preservation of land in its natural condition, and outdoor recreation based upon the appreciation and enjoyment of nature.
2. The goals of the dual mandate are to foster all the holistic values of completely natural areas, including: environmental health, survival of species, protection for animal and plant life, physical and spiritual health of people, tourism, cultural values and scientific knowledge.
3. Preservation is the highest form of protection for land and resources. The removal, damage or pollution of natural features are totally prohibited. This means no logging, mining, drilling, hydro development, or human settlement.
4. The only human modifications allowed are for the essential needs of public recreation and resource protection. Preservation is the source of a unique and valuable kind of recreation based upon natural attractions, with minimal commercial intrusion. Guiding businesses that provide this kind of recreation are compatible. Commercial development should be located outside of parks, where it will concentrate tourism expenditures in local communities. It is well known that this kind of recreation richly profits businesses across the land.

5. Parks are a shared, public good to be held in trust by governments, and not to be sold or privatized. This requires an institutional legacy of experienced public servants. This legacy must remain stable as governments come and go.
6. Ecosystem health and the survival of species are the top management priorities. Fully protected areas fill a universal need for health and survival that is shared by all species, cultures and generations.
7. Parks should be fully supported by taxes. The government has a duty to maintain sufficient staff and funding to manage every aspect of the park system.
8. Parks should be administered in an unbiased manner, free of conflict of interest. Private interest control through leases of park land or privatization must be avoided.
9. The public has a right to know how its parks are being managed, and to participate in open, transparent planning procedures.
10. Wilderness - large, undeveloped, roadless areas - should be maintained as wilderness in all our parks. Such areas best represent the ecological, health, and scientific values of parks, while including many intangible values of importance to people - values such as remoteness, pristine qualities, solitude, and natural quiet.
11. Parks are for perpetuity. They contain priceless biological, cultural and historical legacies. Unmaking parks or changing park laws to weaken protection violates a sacred trust belonging to all those in the past and present who fought and paid for our parks, as well as future generations. Parks laws should be changed to better honour these principles, never to undermine them.

**WHEREAS** BC Parks were created to protect the ecosystems of the province in their natural state, and

**WHEREAS** BC Parks provide citizens with places to experience the wonders of our natural environment, and

**WHEREAS** industrial activities and an increase in commercialism are counterproductive to the dual goals of conservation and appropriate recreation in parks, and

**WHEREAS** public administration of parks through taxes is the best way to support the goals of conservation and recreation, and

**WHEREAS** the Federation of B.C. Naturalists has a long history of supporting our parks, and

**WHEREAS** the mandate of the Federation of B.C. Naturalists includes keeping nature worth knowing, and

**WHEREAS** over 80 organizations in British Columbia and beyond have signed a declaration to support our system of parks, including the FBCN Clubs: Alouette Field Naturalists, Comox Valley Naturalists, North Okanagan Naturalists and South Okanagan Naturalists, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of B.C. Naturalists support in principle the Declaration on the Principles of Parks.

**Resolution 2006-08. South Okanagan – Similkameen National Park Reserve** - Submitted by the Thompson-Shuswap-Okanagan Regional Directors; Tabled May 2, 2006; Approved by email/fax circulation, with clarification from Parks Canada on grazing position, by Executive and Directors, May 17, 2006

**WHEREAS** a National Park Reserve has been proposed in the South Okanagan – Similkameen (SOS), the concept being to consolidate, infill and provide enhanced ecosystem integrity within and surrounding delineated Protected Areas, and

**WHEREAS** a National Park Reserve in the SOS will be a significant advance towards:

1. completing Canada's National Park network representative of regional ecosystems
2. enhancing conservation of the SOS "national treasure of biodiversity"
3. helping to sustain continuity of a south-north ecological corridor crucial to climate change adaptation of the dry grasslands of the interior dry plateau of BC
4. completing east-west ecological cross-section of the continental "Pacific Northwest"
5. telling the stories of First Nations and later pioneers culture;
6. enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors,
7. providing a substantial boost to regional economy; and,
8. fostering conservation synergies in adjacent Washington State inclusive of prospects for an 'international grasslands park', and

**WHEREAS** a national park reserve in the SOS is consistent with:

1. Parks Canada national objective to establish one or more National Parks in Natural Region Three (BC's Interior Dry Plateau)
2. United Nations **Earth Summit** Agreement in Rio de Janeiro, 1993
3. The **National Accord for Protection of Species at Risk**, 1996
4. Recommendation in George W. Scotter Report, 1998
5. Conservation priorities in government's Core Review and Service Plan, 2001
6. **Okanagan – Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan** (LRMP), 2001
7. The strategic goal of 37+ conservation organizations of local, provincial, national and international scope (SOS Conservation Program), 2001
8. Prime Minister's 'Johannesburg commitment' to National Parks, 2002
9. High scores in all 9 Parks Canada park proposal evaluation criteria, and

**WHEREAS** to represent the broadest spectrum of biodiversity that occurs within the interior dry plateau of BC and provide future connectivity, areas inclusive of White Lake Protected Area and the Canadian Wildlife Service lands at Vaseux Lake, should be represented within the National Park Reserve core areas, and

**WHEREAS** time is of the essence and an urgent show of broad public support for a SOS National Park Reserve within the next eight months of the feasibility study is crucial to success, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federation of BC Naturalists convey to the federal and provincial governments our strong support for the establishment of a South Okanagan – Similkameen National Park Reserve.

**Resolution 2007-01. Agricultural Self-Sufficiency** - Submitted by Vancouver Natural History Society, Approved at Vernon AGM, May 5, 2007

**WHEREAS** British Columbia has preserved five percent of its land base within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for food production; and

**WHEREAS** the agricultural land base is an important resource for current and future food production needs; and

**WHEREAS** the agricultural land base also provides many ecological services to the province, including wildlife habitat; and

**WHEREAS** B C's farm economy is reliant upon farmland for a proportion of its agricultural and food productions; and

**WHEREAS** the population of BC is expected to grow by 1.3 million people over the next 25 years; and

**WHEREAS** only four to five percent of BC's land base is arable land; and

**WHEREAS** maintaining our current level of food self-reliance in 2025 would require a 30-per-cent increase in agricultural production; and

**WHEREAS** the equivalent of 48% of the food for the province is produced within the ALR and 88% of the electricity for the province is generated within BC; and

**WHEREAS** Canadian food imports from the United States are facing increasing demand from China and the US domestic market; and

**WHEREAS** the provincial government has made it a priority to become energy self sufficient yet it has not shown any similar desire towards food self-sufficiency; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists) urge the Government of British Columbia to commit to increasing food self-sufficiency; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Government of British Columbia acknowledges that the preservation and protection of farmland, is in the public's best interest.

**Resolution 2007-02 Management of Forests: proposed amendment of Forest and Range Practices Act and increased level of government monitoring of forestry activities - Submitted by Williams Lake Field Naturalists, Approved at Vernon AGM, May 5, 2007**

**WHEREAS** the B.C. provincial government has enacted new forestry legislation that no longer requires the forest industry to notify the public about the location, timing and nature of planned timber harvesting and road building activities on public lands; and

**WHEREAS** this new forestry legislation has shifted much more of the responsibility for forestry and environmental stewardship on public forest lands to the forest industry; and

**WHEREAS** the location, timing, and nature of timber harvesting and road building activities can have potentially significant detrimental effects on wildlife and fish habitat;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists) urge the Minister of Forests and Range to amend the Forest and Range Practices Act to require that forestry companies post site plan information regarding the location, timing and of nature of forest harvesting and road building activities on public land. This information should be posted in a manner that is convenient for the public to access, should include details on any special environmental features that are present and how they will be managed, and should be posted well in advance of the activities' commencement date in order to allow adequate time for the public to review the information and provide meaningful comment;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists) urge the Minister of Forests and Range and the Minister of Environment to increase the level of monitoring of forestry activities and the cumulative effects of all forestry development on public lands to ensure that the highest standards of environmental stewardship and forest management are being met.

**Resolution 2007 – 03. Brunswick Point Farmlands - Submitted by Vancouver Natural History Society; approved May 5, 2007 at Vernon AGM**

### **Introduction**

Rights to the farmlands on Brunswick Point in Delta, a significant shoreline feature which contains some of the most important upland and salt water marsh areas in the Fraser River Estuary Important Bird Area, have been included as an element of the 2006 Draft Treaty between the Tsawwassen First Nation and the Governments of Canada and British Columbia. In the Treaty the Governments are committed to removing these farmlands from the Agricultural Land Reserve and the First Nation has indicated that it wishes to use farmlands removed from the ALR for future development.

### **Preamble**

On March 12, 1968, the BC Government acquired approximately 4,000 acres of farmland in West Delta, later described as the Roberts Bank Back-up Lands (the Back-up Lands). These Back-up Lands included 278 acres known as the Brunswick Point Farmlands. The Brunswick Point Farmlands have been farmed continuously since they were originally settled in the 1880s. Four of the farming families who originally settled Brunswick Point continue to farm them as lessees to this day. The BC Government stated at the time that the lands were being expropriated by the Minister of Highways under the Highway Act at the request of the BC Harbours Board, which intended to develop the port on Roberts Bank.

In fact the port was ultimately developed by the Government of Canada on the Roberts Bank causeway without participation by the BC Government or the need to use the Back-up Lands. In 1973 the Back-up Lands were placed in the Agricultural Land Reserve because the BC Government of the day decided that the Back-up Lands should be used for agriculture and not developed for industrial use.

The 1995 Holme Report, which was commissioned by the BC Ministry of Agriculture, found that the Back-up Lands were “a critical component of the farmland base in Delta and the Fraser Valley” and “a key component in BC’s agriculture and food strategy” as well as being a “critical component of the habitat required for significant populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, herons and raptors which migrate through and winter in the Fraser Valley”.

In 1998 the BC Government announced its intention to sell approximately 2,680 acres of the Backup Lands back to members of the Delta farming community who, in some cases, were lessees who had not been the original owners. The Brunswick Point Farmlands were not included in this offer in spite of the fact that all the Brunswick Point lessees were original owners or their descendants. The latter were extremely concerned at the time that they were not being treated fairly.

In 1998 the BC Government also entered into the Roberts Bank Protocol Agreement with the Tsawwassen First Nation (the TFN) which contained certain commitments with respect to the Brunswick Point Farmlands, described at that time as the Category B Lands.

The Brunswick Point Farmlands have now been incorporated in the Final Agreement between the TFN, the Government of Canada and the BC Government. As one element of an extremely complex Agreement the TFN has been granted “rights of refusal” to lands described as the Rights of Refusal Lands, which include lands originally described as Category B Lands, which include the Brunswick Point Farmlands.

The BC Government states in the Agreement that it will offer the leaseholders of the Category B Lands the right to purchase. In spite of that commitment the rights to be granted to the TFN are described as “rights of first refusal”.

The four farming families who are presently leasing the Brunswick Point Farmlands have made several attempts to persuade the BC Government to remove the rights of refusal from the Agreement so that the lands will not be encumbered by such rights if and when the leaseholders are able to purchase the lands.

The Governments of Canada and BC are to be commended for the efforts they have made to conclude a Final Agreement for a Treaty with the TFN. Nevertheless we are concerned that the agreement reached will have significant negative impacts on the farmland and wildlife habitat in a vital area of the Fraser Delta. It will also be unfair to the farming families of Brunswick Point, who are not being treated the same as other former owners or lessees of the Back-up Lands.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** the Tsawwassen First Nation (the TFN) is to be granted “rights of refusal” to purchase the Brunswick Point Farmlands in the Final Agreement between the TFN and the Governments of Canada and BC; and

**WHEREAS** the Brunswick Point Farmlands are among the most fertile agricultural lands in BC and are presently located within the Province’s Agricultural Land Reserve (the ALR), and

**WHEREAS** the amount of fertile agricultural land in BC amounts to no more than 5% of its total land area, as a consequence of which such land is in very short supply, and

**WHEREAS** the Brunswick Point Farmlands and their adjacent salt marshes lie at the heart of the Fraser Estuary Important Bird Area, which has been rated as the most important of 597 designated Important Bird Areas in Canada, due to the very high habitat values of the uplands and marshes for many species of wildlife, including species whose future is deemed to be threatened by either COSEWIC or the BC Government; and

**WHEREAS** Premier Campbell has clearly stated that one of the Five Great Goals of the BC Government is:

“To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none”, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the Governments of Canada and British Columbia and the Tsawwassen First Nation to provide it with an assurance that the Brunswick Point Farmlands will

remain in the Agricultural Land Reserve so they can continue to be farmed and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

**Resolution 2007-04. Protection of North Okanagan Grasslands** - Submitted by the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club; approved May 5, 2007

**WHEREAS** grasslands cover less than 1% of British Columbia, and

**WHEREAS** the grasslands in the North Okanagan Basin are an important transitional area between the rough fescue-bluebunch wheatgrass communities of the upper grasslands in the Thompson and the grasslands of the Southern Okanagan Basins, and

**WHEREAS** grasslands are essential for the survival of over 30% of our species at risk, most of which live in the Okanagan valley, and

**WHEREAS** less than 3% of the grasslands of the North Okanagan Basin are represented in protected areas, and

**WHEREAS** more than 33,000 ha of the grasslands of the North Okanagan Basin have been lost to urban and agricultural development. therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of BC Naturalists urge the Government of British Columbia, the Government of Canada and local First Nations to acknowledge the importance of the North Okanagan Grasslands for the healthy survival and diversity of the overall British Columbia ecological system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the British Columbia Government and the Government of Canada commit to bring their political and financial support to the creation of a North Okanagan Grasslands Provincial Park.

**Resolution 2008-01. Establishment of a Natural Values Commission** - Submitted by Kamloops Naturalist Club, Approved AGM May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Preamble

Kamloops Naturalist Club has been involved in discussions with the developers of a large residential resort-golf course at the former Tranquille Institution lands west of Kamloops and made two presentations at public hearings into the project. Between the first and second Public Hearings an application was made by the developer to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to facilitate the development. It was evident on reading the ALC decision that the Commission has incredible legal powers they can use to protect agricultural land. In our submission to the City of Kamloops at the second public hearing we asked the City Council to be our advocates for the substantial natural values in the area, in the absence of a Natural Values Commission. This conundrum has been repeated in many communities across the province, hence the proposed resolution:

**WHEREAS** the Agricultural Land Commission has considerable legal powers to prescribe actions in proposed land developments to protect agricultural land, and

**WHEREAS** large developments do not face the same rigorous requirements for protection of natural values within or adjacent to their lands, and

**WHEREAS** there are few legal powers to prescribe actions to protect natural values in proposed land developments, therefore

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature petition the provincial government to address this discrepancy in land management through establishment of a Natural Values Commission with powers similar to those of the Agricultural Land Commission.

**2008-02. Urban Sprawl and Resorts** - *Submitted by Kamloops Naturalist Club; resolution **tabled***

**WHEREAS** government policy has in recent years removed barriers to development of resorts, and

**WHEREAS** this has encouraged developments that are disconnected from nearby communities, and

**WHEREAS** this has led to developments describing themselves as resorts but appearing to be primarily housing projects, and

**WHEREAS** such developments contribute to urban sprawl and have deleterious effects on nature, and

**WHEREAS** such projects are of great concern in the semi-arid valley bottoms within the southern interior of the province, therefore

**Be it resolved that** BC Nature call upon the Minister of Environment and Minister of Agriculture and Lands to oppose the characterization of disconnected subdivisions as resorts, to seek the advice of BC Nature members and other public representatives on the impact of such projects, and to put in place a policy of public education regarding the effects of urban housing intruding into valued natural areas.

**Resolution 2008-03. Garibaldi at Squamish** - *Submitted by Squamish Environmental Conservation Society, Approved AGM May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008*

**WHEREAS** the Garibaldi at Squamish development proposes building an estimated 5,739 housing units in 4901 hectares of land that has been identified as prime habitat for endangered or at risk species such as Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Grizzly Bear and Wolverine, and

**WHEREAS** there are twenty at risk species that have either been seen or probably use the area proposed for development, and

**WHEREAS** the Garibaldi at Squamish proposed development, includes a threatened Grizzly Bear Population Unit that has been designated for recovery by the province, and

**WHEREAS** the Garibaldi at Squamish proposed development bordering on Garibaldi Park will introduce year round significant numbers of people, noise and disruption into the park itself, thereby degrading the wildlife value of this Class A Provincial Park, and



**WHEREAS** the Garibaldi at Squamish proposed development will take water from Brohm Creek for domestic and other purposes and removing any water from Brohm Creek will endanger important salmon and steelhead populations, therefore

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature strongly urge the Province of British Columbia to reject outright the proposal to build a ski/golf resort known as Garibaldi at Squamish, located immediately north of Squamish, B.C.

### **Resolution 2008-04. BC Nature Position Statement on Economic Growth**

Submitted by Lillooet Naturalist Society, Approved AGM May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008

*(Please note that this differs from our regular conservation resolutions, which are normally addressed to government, but was accepted by the Resolution Committee for discussion and consideration by all our members as an educational statement of position by BC Nature).*

The resolution has been adapted from similar statements by the North American Section of the Society for Conservation Biology (Society for Conservation Biology 2004), the BC Field Ornithologists (Lillooet, May 2007) and others (see Czech, Brian). The Lillooet Naturalists and the Arrowsmith Naturalists, member clubs in BC Nature, have adopted position statements on economic growth. Please also see:

Dawe, N.K. and T. Martin. 2007. Conservation strategies: are we only addressing the symptoms? BC Nature 45:15. Dawe, N.K. and T. Martin. 2007. The real threat to biodiversity: infinite economic growth in a finite world. BC Nature 46:25.

**WHEREAS** economic growth is an increase in the production and consumption of goods which entails an increase in the flow of natural resources, through the economy and back to the environment, and

**WHEREAS** economic growth occurs when there is an increase in the product of population multiplied by per capita production and consumption, and

**WHEREAS** economic growth is often and generally indicated by increasing real gross domestic product (GDP) or real gross national product (GNP), and

**WHEREAS** based upon established principles of physics and ecology, there is a limit to economic growth (as demonstrated historically in many societal collapses), and

**WHEREAS** a steady state economy is generally indicated by stabilized (or mildly fluctuating) real gross domestic product (GDP) or real gross national product (GNP), and

**WHEREAS** a steady state economy, with a stabilized (or mildly fluctuating) product of population multiplied by per capita consumption, is an alternative to economic growth, and

**WHEREAS** steady state economy, with stabilized (or mildly fluctuating) production and consumption of goods and services, is an alternative to economic growth, and

**WHEREAS** steady state economy does not preclude economic development, a qualitative process in which different technologies may be employed and the relative prominence of economic sectors may evolve, and

**WHEREAS** Canada is a part of the North American economy, which grows as an integrated whole consisting of agricultural, extractive, manufacturing, and services sectors that require natural resources inputs and produce wastes, and

**WHEREAS** there is increasing evidence that North American economic growth is having negative effects on the long-term ecological and economic welfare of North America and the world, and **WHEREAS** upon establishing steady state economies, it would be advisable for North American nations to assist other nations in moving from the goal of economic growth to the goal of a steady state economy, beginning with those nations currently enjoying the highest levels of per capita consumption, and

**WHEREAS** for many nations with widespread poverty, including Canada's First Nations, increasing per capita consumption (or, alternatively, more equitable distributions of wealth) remains an appropriate goal for the time being; yet the ultimate goal should be the establishment of healthy ecological and social conditions within the framework of a steady state economy, and

**WHEREAS** there is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and the ecological services underpinning the human economy (for example, insect and vermin control, pollination, decomposition, climate regulation), therefore

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature support in principle the steady state economy as a sustainable alternative to economic growth, and

**Be it further resolved** that BC Nature specifically undertake the following actions:

- BC Nature include a copy of this position statement as part of the BC Nature web site and in the next issue of BC Nature
- BC Nature undertake to educate the public and policy makers on this fundamental conflict and how it relates to human health and well-being
- BC Nature encourage the member clubs to adopt such a position statement to bring the matter to the attention of local communities
- BC Nature include mention of this root cause of loss of biodiversity as a part of their routine work in conservation
- BC Nature encourage Nature Canada to circulate this position statement and encourage adoption by other Provincial Affiliates and the Canadian Nature Network.

**Resolution 2008-05. First Nations and National Park Feasibility Study** - *Submitted by members of Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalists & South Okanagan Naturalist Club; Approved AGM May 31st, 2008*

**WHEREAS** the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, and the Sylix Nation, feel that they are not being treated honorably by the government in respect to the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park feasibility study, and

**WHEREAS** First Nations' support is essential to a positive recommendation from the National Park feasibility study, and

**WHEREAS**, among the many benefits to all residents of this region, the National Park will help to provide a secure land base for conserving and restoring the immensely rich culture of First Nations, therefore

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature joins with First Nations in the belief that it is essential that the National Park feasibility study include First Nations in a manner that is honourable, forthright and timely, and

**Be it further resolved** that the federal and provincial government partners in the feasibility study strive to reach a consensus that will respect First Nations.

**Resolution 2008-06. Ocean Dumping in Howe Sound** - *Submitted by Squamish Environmental Conservation Society, Approved AGM May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008*

Background

Howe Sound has been the most polluted body of water on the North American continent. Acid rock drainage from the Britannia Mine, mercury pollution from the Squamish chemical plant, plus outfalls from two pulp mills resulted in a toxic marine environment all contributed to this unenviable reputation.

Major clean-up efforts have been undertaken. Residual mercury contamination has been significantly reduced on the Nexan site in Squamish; treatment of the acid drainage at Britannia has vastly improved water quality entering Howe Sound; the closing of the Woodfiber mill has also improved air and water quality.

**WHEREAS:** Currently, under license from Environment Canada, the Provincial Ministry of Transportation is disposing of rock which is a mixture of surface material and mine tailings stocked piled on the Mekin lands during the 1991 flood of Britannia Beach. This material is a mixture of relatively innocuous material with significant hot spots comprising acid producing materials and heavy metals.

**WHEREAS:** Disposal of this material at the Watts Point ocean dump site is resulting in the fines being suspended in the water column to the detriment of juvenile salmon, juvenile herring and other water inhabitants. Adding more to the heavy metal load of Howe Sound is also environmentally unfortunate.

**WHEREAS:** The Ministry of Environment has approved a dumping permit for this material for Jane Basin located at the top of the Britannia mine. Placement of contaminated material in this basin will allow for leachate to be treated at the existing plant, and furthermore it will over time reduce the volume of acid runoff generated by the mine, thereby reducing, over time, treatment costs. The objective is to fill, re-contour and re-vegetate Jane Basin (approximately 2 football fields in volume) located at the top of the mountain, above the mine.

**Therefore be it resolved that:** BC Nature urge the Province of British Columbia to reconsider and reverse its decision to ocean dump material at Watt's Point in Howe Sound.

**2009-01. Degradation of fish habitat resulting from Fraser River gravel removal** *Submitted by Nature Vancouver; passed, May 2 2009, Duncan AGM*

**Preamble**

The Province of BC has decided to remove gravel between Tranmer Bar and Harrison Bar in the Hope to Mission reach of the Fraser known as the gravel reach, ostensibly with the aim of reducing flood risks and protecting public safety. The Province published the following statements regarding this gravel removal program:

- Each year the equivalent of 15,000 to 63,000 dump truck loads of gravel is washed down the Fraser River and deposited between Hope and Mission.
- As a result, huge gravel deposits have formed over time, increasing the flood risk for the millions of people who live and work in the Fraser Valley
- The Province is working directly with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the BC Ministry of Environment to ensure any gravel extraction is done based on a sound scientific approach – one that protects this sensitive environment while balancing the need to protect public safety.
- Independent environmental consultants will be on site at each approved gravel removal location monitoring the work. These independent consultants will report directly to the Province and will have the ability to issue stop work orders at any site where they have environmental concerns.

It is also understood that the suggested purpose of the program is to counter the deposit of gravel carried into the gravel reach from upstream. It has been assumed that these deposits raise the bed of the river, thereby reducing the vertical distance between the river bed and the top of the flood protection dykes. It has also been assumed that these deposits reduce the degree of flood protection afforded by the dykes. It is known that residents of the communities along this reach of the Fraser are concerned about this possibility.

Those members of Nature Vancouver familiar with the gravel reach take a view contrary to that of the Province. They rely on the research of Dr. Michael Church of the UBC Department of Geography, who has done extensive research into what is known as the “gravel budget” of the Fraser River and who is regarded as one of the foremost authorities on the geomorphology of the Fraser. Dr. Church is also a member of Nature Vancouver.

Nature Vancouver’s members strongly believe that a decision to interfere with the river in this reach, one of the richest salmon spawning and rearing reaches in the world and prime habitat for the endangered white sturgeon, should be based on sound science rather than on assumptions about possible effects.

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** an agreement was signed in 2005 between the Federal and Provincial governments to remove up to 2.3 million cubic metres of gravel from the Fraser River over a five year period, or about 450 000 cubic metres per year; and

**WHEREAS** it was estimated that this removal would lower the river bed enough to reduce flood hazard; and

**WHEREAS** a study by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC) commissioned by the BC Government in 2007 showed that removal of 2.3 million cubic metres of gravel from sites designated by the government would result in a lowering of water level by less than 10 cm, or about 5 cm on average; and

**WHEREAS** this gravel removal would require disturbance of more than 100 hectares of riverbed habitat based on an average excavation depth of two metres; and

**WHEREAS** NHC's conclusion was that "It does not appear that large-scale gravel removals from the gravel reach of the Fraser River are effective in lowering the flood profile" and that a similar conclusion was earlier reached by Professor Millar of UBC's Civil Engineering department; and

**WHEREAS** historical practice permitted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has required that gravel be removed only from bar tops when they are dry in winter, thus eliminating the most important shallow water areas that serve as 'escape' terrain for fishes during floods; and

**WHEREAS** the gravel removals that have occurred already have clearly been destructive of important habitat, including the exposure of substantial areas of pink salmon spawning beds at Big Bar in the winter of 2007, and that the reported removal of 300,000 cubic metres of gravel from Spring Bar in 2008 left a substantial hole in the river bed which will intercept incoming sediment for some time, preventing natural sediment movement downstream with potentially adverse effects on salmon spawning;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature urge the BC Government to halt efforts directed at the removal of gravel from the Fraser's gravel reach and that the precautionary principle be exercised, in recognition of the conservation of the invaluable fish species in this great river.

**2009-02. Deltaport Expansion, Roberts Bank, Delta - Submitted by Nature Vancouver; passed unanimously, May 2 2009, Duncan AGM**

**WHEREAS** Port Metro Vancouver continues to state its intention to develop a second container terminal at its Deltaport facility; and

**WHEREAS** Deltaport is situated on Roberts Bank, in the very centre of the Fraser Estuary ecosystem, which is considered to be the most significant of 597 Important Bird Areas in Canada; and

**WHEREAS** an Important Bird Area is a designation which is recognized in more than 100 countries all over the world as an important means of protecting globally, continentally and regionally significant bird species and their habitats; and

**WHEREAS** the expansion of the terminal and causeway for BC Ferries, the operation of the coal port and the expansion of the existing container terminal have already resulted in massive disturbance of the ecosystems of Roberts Bank; and

**WHEREAS** the current expansion of the Third Container Berth at Deltaport has demonstrated that accidents are prone to happen in major construction programs and that the execution of such programs in ecologically sensitive areas fail to observe the precautionary principle; and

**WHEREAS** the business case for a second container terminal has become much less pressing for the following reasons:

- Container volumes are significantly reduced on the west coast
- There are planned expansions in Vancouver's inner harbour
- US west coast ports have spare capacity and are competing with one another and with Vancouver for volume
- The Prince Rupert container terminal has yet to reach full capacity and expansions are planned for 2010 and 2025
- There is the possibility of new ports in Mexico and Nicaragua
- The Panama Canal is being widened and when construction is completed by 2015 the world's largest container ships will bypass the west coast altogether when headed for US east coast ports

- The North West Passage may also become an east-west shipping route if global warming continues
- There is little or no prospect of Port Metro Vancouver doubling its market share of container traffic which would be a pre-requisite for any further expansion of container facilities at Deltaport; and

**WHEREAS** agencies such as Fisheries and Oceans Canada in 2003 and the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada in 2005 expressed serious misgivings at the potential impact of constructing the third container berth; and

**WHEREAS** any further expansion in the Roberts Bank area will almost certainly lead to a further loss of British Columbia's most productive farmland as well as having many other detrimental environmental impacts on the communities and farmlands of South Delta;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature and its member clubs urge the Canadian and BC Government departments responsible for transportation and the environment to advise Port Metro Vancouver that any further expansion of Deltaport is unacceptable due to the cumulative environmental impact of additional expansion when combined with previous developments in this ecologically critical area.

**2009-03. Coarse Woody Debris as a critical component of forest ecosystems** - Submitted by Williams Lake Field Naturalists; passed May 2 2009, Duncan AGM

**WHEREAS** coarse woody debris (CWD) is a fundamental component of forest ecosystems, critical to:

- Providing habitat to many dead wood dependent organisms (e.g., fungi, insects, vertebrates) which in turn support a broader food web (e.g., insectivorous birds, bears);
- Providing energy to support forest resilience (e.g., ability to resist extensive damage from forest pests, climate change or invasive species);
- Providing water storage in ecosystems frequently experiencing drought;
- Providing pH buffering capacity to forest soils which become acidic as a result of biomass removal;
- Providing nutrient and structural components to forest soils in a province noted for lowproductivity soils; and

**WHEREAS** management guidelines for CWD retention under the Forest and Range Practices Act are already inadequate for protecting this resource under existing forest harvesting pressures, plans to allow biomass removal by the bioenergy industry have the potential to exacerbate this problem considerably;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that in view of the importance of Course Woody Debris to sound ecological management of forests, BC Nature urge the Government of BC to develop a science-based woody debris (organic matter) management system for BC forests.

**2009-04. Conservation Fund established by Regional District of East Kootenay**  
Submitted by Kamloops Naturalist Club; passed May 2 2009, Duncan AGM

**WHEREAS** the Regional District of East Kootenay has adopted Bylaw No. 2083, following the November 15th, 2008 referendum, to establish a conservation fund through the mechanism of a services bylaw; and

**WHEREAS** the Columbia Valley has become the first community in Canada to adopt such a comprehensive conservation fund tax; and

**WHEREAS** this fund will raise over two million dollars during the nine-year term of the fund with immense benefit to conserving natural areas and protecting wildlife;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature commend the far-sighted citizens who voted for the measure, and applaud the directors of the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) for their willingness to pioneer this vital concept, by sending a letter of appreciation to the RDEK.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature explore the possibility of making an appropriate acknowledgement at the annual conference of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

**2009-05. Creation of a Life Bank - Resolution withdrawn**

**2009-06. Thompson River and Fraser River steelhead - Submitted by Kamloops Naturalist Club; passed May 2 2009, Duncan AGM**

**WHEREAS** provincial ministry biologists have publicly stated that in 2009 the Thompson River steelhead runs are on the verge of extinction; and

**WHEREAS** the Thompson steelheads are considered one of the world's great races of steelhead; renowned for their strength, their large size and their astonishing fertility – the Deadmans river females arguably the most fecund of all the world's steelheads - with attendant economic and biological worth; and

**WHEREAS** the Fraser bar and Native Nations sustenance fisheries, typically accounting for half of the run's annual numbers, have the advantages of concentration, a narrow time window and the possibilities of negotiated compensation - for sustenance fishery replacement; and

**WHEREAS** reducing targeted and incidental kills in the Thompson and Fraser river systems by only one-half has potential to restore the runs and may in fact be the only option left.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature request the BC Minister of Environment to convene an urgent high-level conference of the appropriate ministries of the Government of Canada and with broad representation from the First Nations living along the river - with the objective of securing an agreement, which would see the Thompson River and Fraser River - from the junction with the Fraser to the extent of brackish water in the estuary - closed to all salmonid fishing from September 15, 2009 to Nov 15, 2009. This closure to exist for a period of three years, with appropriate compensation and enforcement plans, thereby representing a last ditch desperate attempt to save this wonderful provincial resource - one of the marvels of nature.

**2009-06. Fish Farming in BC - Submitted by Lillooet Naturalist Society; passed at May 2 2009 AGM, Duncan**

**WHEREAS** the province of British Columbia receives economic benefits from both wild and farmed salmon and depends on the future security, viability, and stability of both sectors;

**AND WHEREAS** the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence indicates that commercial open net-cage salmon farms can have serious negative environmental impacts, particularly on wild salmon runs;

**AND WHEREAS** emerging closed containment aquaculture technologies offer the ability to separate commercially farmed fish from the natural environment, limiting negative environmental impacts - especially the transmission of diseases and parasites between farmed and wild salmon:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the board of directors of BC Nature request that the provincial government not allow any further expansion of open net-cage salmon farming in BC waters;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature urge both the provincial and federal governments to allocate funds towards the establishment of a closed system aquaculture innovation and development fund, sufficient to support more than one commercial scale project, *and* that they initiate work on a comprehensive strategy for a full scale transition of the industry to closed system aquaculture;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this resolution be forwarded to BC Minister of Agriculture and Lands; BC Minister of Environment; BC Minister of Technology, Trade and Economic Development; Premier of BC; Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Prime Minister of Canada with copies to the First Nations Leadership Council, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

**Resolution 2010-01. Funding for BC's Provincial Parks - Submitted by Nature Vancouver**  
*(Vancouver Natural History Society) Approved May 15, 2010 Kamloops*

**WHEREAS** British Columbia has over 900 provincial parks and protected areas, encompassing 13.05 million hectares (14.26% of B.C.'s land base), and

**WHEREAS** these parks and protected areas contain nationally and internationally significant natural and cultural features, protect the natural biodiversity of species, and provide opportunities for outstanding outdoor recreation experiences, and

**WHEREAS** these parks and protected areas are a public trust and are vital to the quality of life and health of British Columbians, and

**WHEREAS** the provincial government has directed BC Parks to be the "best parks system in the world," (1) and it is the vision of BC Parks "To be a world leader in parks and protected areas management,"(2) and

*(1) BC Parks Program Plan 2007-2012, Ministry of Environment, updated October 28, 2008, p. 1 (2) BC Parks Program Plan 2007-2012, p. 11*

**WHEREAS** BC Parks' operating budget has declined by approximately 25 % over the last decade while the number of parks and protected areas has increased by approximately 50%, and

**WHEREAS** recreational trails, bridges, backcountry campsites and sanitary facilities are in poor condition in many parks, and provision in parks of interpretive and trails information has been discontinued, leading to complaints by park users, and



**WHEREAS** government funding for park interpretation programs has been eliminated even though these programs increase public awareness of the ecological value of parks and encourage respectful and safe behavior during park visits, and

**WHEREAS** the number of park rangers has been greatly reduced, resulting in inadequate surveillance of parkland and contact with park visitors,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature urge the Provincial Government to increase funding for BC Parks over the next five years to a level that ensures

- adequate protection of parkland
- improved maintenance of park facilities, including recreational trails and backcountry facilities
- increased number of park rangers
- provision of interpretive and trails information in parks
- provision of interpretation programs and that the increase to funding start with a significant increase immediately and a substantial increase in 2011, BC Parks' centenary year.

**Resolution 2010-02. Nechako White Sturgeon** - Submitted by June Wood BC Nature representative for Community Working Group, Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative Approved May 15, 2010 - Kamloops

**WHEREAS** the Nechako white sturgeon is unique from all other sturgeon in British Columbia; and

**WHEREAS** sturgeon are listed as endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA); and

**WHEREAS** the Nechako white sturgeon has the lowest SARA-listed population of all white sturgeon; and

**WHEREAS** the population of Nechako white sturgeon is estimated to be fewer than 350 mature adults, of which only 150 are females; and

**WHEREAS** a critical component of the Recovery Plan for the Nechako white sturgeon, due to the critically low gene pool, is the construction of a conservation aquaculture facility (hatchery);

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the Ministry of Environment to provide the required financing for the timely implementation of the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative's Recovery Plan, which includes, but is not limited to, a conservation aquaculture facility; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to provide funding to ensure the implementation of the National Recovery Strategy for white sturgeon, which includes Nechako white sturgeon.

**Resolution 2010-03: Managing watersheds in Interior BC to reduce erosion and water pollution** - Submitted by North Okanagan Naturalists Club Approved May 15, 2010 Kamloops

**WHEREAS** the forest watersheds of British Columbia's Interior are often extensively damaged by large-scale clearcuts and road building causing rapid erosion by run off, mudslides and flooding resulting in polluted and silty water entering public water sources, and

**WHEREAS** this polluted, silty water, together with livestock fouling, endangers public health and welfare, resulting in annual boiling and undrinkable water advisories, and

**WHEREAS** water flow from these affected watersheds is uneven and results in water shortages and restrictions detrimental to both public and business, and

**WHEREAS** these episodes of flood and scarcity of water flow are detrimental to fish and wildlife, and **WHEREAS** better forest management, with a mix of young, mature and old trees within a lightly thinned canopy, exemplified in the Interior on the Creston Community Watershed, would result in a more even flow and clean water for public and private use, therefore

**Be it resolved that BC Nature urge the provincial Minister of Forests and Range to:**

- Replace large clear-cut logging with alternative harvesting systems such as shelter-wood, group selection and small block openings the length of two large trees across;
- Replace large-scale clear-cutting and rotational harvesting by periodic, e.g. every 10 years, selection logging of watershed forests serviced by well-constructed access roads; and
- Prevent the grazing of livestock on public lands in locations where they cause contamination of water destined for public consumption and where they damage stream banks.

**Resolution 2010-04 Open net cage salmon farming** - *Submitted by Lillooet Naturalists Society*  
*Approved May 15, 2010 Kamloops*

**WHEREAS** salmon and all marine life are a vital resource to the economy and ecosystem of British Columbia, and any actions which threaten salmon or marine life threaten the well being and the livelihood of the people of British Columbia.

**AND WHEREAS** the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence indicates that commercial open net cage salmon farms can have serious negative environmental impacts, particularly on wild salmon;

**AND WHEREAS** recent evidence indicates that open net cage salmon farms in the northern Georgia Strait may be negatively impacting out-migrating juvenile Fraser River Salmon;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature request the Provincial and Federal Governments to close the five active open net cage salmon farms in Okisollo Channel and rescind these tenures, as well as the tenures of the four inactive farms in Hoskyn Channel, collectively known as the Wild Salmon Narrows.

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature request the federal government to not allow any further expansion of open net-cage salmon farming in BC waters;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** BC Nature request the Provincial and Federal Governments to undertake emergency action to close these farms and implement a comprehensive strategy to move the salmon aquaculture industry fully out of the marine ecosystem into closed system technology;

**AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT** this resolution be communicated to Nature Canada to enlist their action on this matter as well as forwarded to the provincial Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Minister of Environment, Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and relevant MPs and MLAs and copies to the First Nations Leadership Council, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Georgia Strait Alliance.

**Resolution 2011-01 Cat Licensing** - Submitted by Victoria Natural History Society - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake

**WHEREAS** cats that roam free, whether owned, stray, or feral, kill birds and other wildlife, including endangered species; and

**WHEREAS** free-roaming cats spread disease to other cats, wildlife, and humans; and

**WHEREAS** free-roaming cats often lead short, traumatic, and painful lives; and

**WHEREAS** as part of BC Nature's role as a steward of this province's biological diversity, it is incumbent upon us to be doing all we can to preserve and protect our region's wildlife; and

**WHEREAS** many communities in other provinces have already recognized the importance of responsible pet ownership and have extended pet requirements to cover cats as well as dogs.

These communities include, but are not limited to, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Toronto; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the BC Union of Municipalities to implement cat licensing, as well as control and restraint ordinances, to help ensure that cats receive the care and protection they deserve.

Progressive provisions found in ordinances should include the following:

- Requirement for all cats to be licensed;
- Mandatory spay/neuter of all cats over six months of age, unless owner purchases annual intact permit
- and/or breeders permit. Medical exemptions can be offered;
- Requirement for all cats to be vaccinated against rabies; and
- Cats must be confined to their owner's property or physically restrained when off the premises.

**Resolution 2011 - 02 Provincial legislation to provide property tax incentives for those wishing to protect their own property from development** - Submitted by Victoria Natural History Society - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake

**WHEREAS** private land owners who choose to protect high quality ecosystems for perpetuity by conservation covenant are not eligible for property tax relief unless the property is in certain Gulf Islands, Ontario or Nova Scotia; and

**WHEREAS** Nova Scotia has enacted the Conservation Property Tax Exemption Act to reward conservation land owners who legally protect their property with property tax reductions; and

**WHEREAS** the province of B.C. has enacted legislation, The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP), in the Islands Trust area, that provides a substantial annual property tax reduction to covenant private land on certain Gulf Islands; and

**WHEREAS** the province of Ontario has enacted the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program; and

**WHEREAS** protecting private land with conservation values, even if the public has no access, benefits the entire region by providing habitat for flora and fauna, as well a host of “green infrastructure” services, such as storm water reduction and pollution absorption-services that would cost the municipality (and tax-payer) if the land were developed; and

**WHEREAS** encouraging private landowners to protect their land is an important part of conserving ecosystems in any region; and

**WHEREAS** property tax incentives for private land protected by legal covenant are a tool that has been successful in other jurisdictions, at very low cost to the public, and seems to be a win-win situation that governments should encourage; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the Union of BC Municipalities, municipalities and the Provincial Government to enact legislation to provide property tax incentives to those private land owners who wish to protect their land and its features by covenant from future development.

**Resolution 2011-03 Pink Mountain - Submitted by Burke Mountain Naturalists - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake**

**WHEREAS** The plateau area of Pink Mountain (elevation 1700 plus meters, alpine tundra ecosystem, subvariant unknown, 180 km northwest of Fort St. John) supports a rare community of plants including at least one red-listed plant which is the only known occurrence in BC, and ten blue-listed plants, of which two are the most southern known location in BC; and

**WHEREAS** The limestone shales exposed on the southern portion of the plateau which supports this unique plant community are not known to exist elsewhere in the region at an elevation where soil can form; and

**WHEREAS** The adjacent 98 hectare Pink Mountain Provincial park, located down slope on the west side and created in 1999 primarily to protect a significant fossil site that contains examples of large fauna from the Mesozoic, does not have appropriate boundaries to protect the unique plant community; and

**WHEREAS** The plateau area also supports rare arctic butterfly species which do not appear to be adequately (if at all) protected by the existing boundaries of Pink Mountain Provincial Park; and

**WHEREAS** Road access to the plateau area of Pink Mountain goes directly through this sensitive area to reach a gas well/extraction facility and any further widening or upgrade of this road would threaten this rare plant community; and

**WHEREAS** The plateau currently has five Telus microwave towers, within the sensitive southern portion of the plateau, which have already severely disturbed this plant community; and

**WHEREAS** The plateau is proposed to become the site of an Aeolis wind tower farm with up to a 400 MW capacity; and

**WHEREAS** The provincial park allows snowmobile traffic in winter and hunting and, thus, does not provide full protection for any small alpine plants that may be located within its boundaries; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature request the Minister of Environment and Minister of Natural Resource Operations to declare the southern plateau area of Pink Mountain an Ecological Reserve or an expansion of the existing Pink Mountain provincial park, to fully protect the unique assemblage of plants found there. The estimated size of the protected areas could be 3-10 square kilometers, dependent on further study and the determination of the location of sensitive plants; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature request the Minister of Environment and Minister of Natural Resource Operations to ensure that there is no further expansion of the microwave towers' footprint, and that additional upgrades to the existing road are prohibited, in order to protect the remaining plants which are immediately adjacent to the road; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that any wind towers on the plateau, if permitted, should be located only on the northern portion of the site, where these unique plants do not occur, and should be serviced by a new access road that will avoid the smaller southern portion of the plateau; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this resolution be sent to the Friends of Ecological Reserves, Telus, Aeolis Wind Inc., Canadian Natural Gas and Treaty 8 First Nations.

**Resolution 2011-04 Raven Underground Coal Mine Project adjacent to Baynes**

**Sound, Vancouver Island** - Submitted by Arrowsmith Naturalists Club - Approved May 14, 2011  
*Williams Lake*

**WHEREAS** the Raven Mine in the Fanny Bay area of Baynes Sound is the first of at least two coal mines proposed by Comox Joint Venture, owned by Compliance Coal Corporation and Asian investors; and

**WHEREAS** coal products from the proposed RUC Project would contribute to greenhouse gases and would undermine citizen and government efforts to reduce emissions, to protect water resources and sensitive ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS** acid mine drainage from the RUC Project risks contaminating surface water, local aquifers and the waters of Baynes Sound; and

**WHEREAS** local aquifers are largely unmapped and the consequences of contamination are unknown, but have the potential to pollute water supplies and the marine environment and an unknown wider area under which, and through which the aquifers flow; and

**WHEREAS** the waters of Baynes Sound yield BC's most profitable shellfishery (generating \$22 million annually), as well as a significant herring fishery and valuable salmon runs, thereby providing over 500 local jobs; and

**WHEREAS** Baynes Sound and its estuarine environment has been designated as an Important Bird Area of continental and global significance to protect significant bird species and the habitat and ecosystems on which they depend; and

**WHEREAS** the footprint of the proposed project abuts identified biodiversity corridors and the sensitive habitat of federally-listed Species at Risk (the Western Toad, Red-legged Frog), as well as BC red and blue-listed species (Roosevelt Elk, Coastal Cutthroat Trout, Water Shrew, Purple Martin, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Pacific Sideband Snail); and

**WHEREAS** scientific studies reveal public health issues associated with living in proximity to coal mines, including higher risks of cardiopulmonary disease, chronic lung disease, hypertension and kidney disease; and

**WHEREAS** the planned method of transporting the coal will be by trucks which will operate around the clock, traveling over narrow, winding roads and through the heart of Cathedral Grove to Port Alberni, while possibly causing significant impacts on both the structural integrity of the highways and for traffic and emergency vehicles which also use this route; and

**WHEREAS** this transportation route is the sole public road access to several provincial parks and the Pacific Rim National Park; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature insists that the appropriate agencies of the Provincial Government undertake a thorough mapping of the aquifers in the areas impacted by such a mine as an initial step in assessing the environmental impacts of the project; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature request that the Federal and Provincial Governments appoint a joint Federal/Provincial independent expert review panel, with full public hearings, to compile a thorough environmental assessment of the project, including the possible impact of this project on both federally-listed Species at Risk, on BC red and blue-listed species, on the aquatic resources of the area, on the health of the public, and on the usage of, and accessibility to both provincial and national parks; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the Provincial Government departments responsible to assess the implications for wildlife impacts and road safety; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be communicated to Nature Canada to enlist their action on this matter, as well as relevant MPs and MLAs, the First Nations Leadership Council, the Assembly of First Nations, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the Georgia Strait Alliance.

**Resolution 2011–05 Boundary expansion of Spipiyus Provincial Park - Submitted by Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake**

**WHEREAS** the Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society in 1991 was instrumental in the creation of Friends of Caren, an advocacy group which went on to urge the BC Government to bring Spipiyus Provincial Park into being; and

**WHEREAS** Friends of Caren, on the 28th day of October 1996, the day the new park was announced, handed a note to the BC Government urging them to expand the boundaries of Spiipiyus Provincial Park, stating that the park was not viable and sustainable with the existing boundaries, given the difficulties of accommodating the needs of recreationists and conservationists harmoniously; and

**WHEREAS** there is now a proposal by the Sechelt Indian Nation to create a large conservation area just to the south of Spiipiyus Provincial Park, known as the Spiipiyus-Swiya Conservation Area; and

**WHEREAS** there have been several proposals put forward for the expansion of Spiipiyus Provincial Park before and since its creation, including the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the Land for Nature Program of the FBCN (BC Nature); therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the federal and provincial governments to create a larger Provincial or National Park on the Caren Range, to encompass the Spiipiyus Provincial Park, which is a national treasure because of its unique ecology, incorporating Canada's oldest closed canopy forests and habitat for several important wildlife species such as the marbled murrelet, with the intention of making the park large enough to reach the ocean shores of the Sechelt Inlet and to meet the needs of the Sechelt First Nation, the people of the Sunshine Coast, British Columbia and Canada in perpetuity.

**2011-06 Resolution on recreational activities in Wildlife Management Areas and conservation areas of the Fraser River delta - Submitted by Delta Naturalists' Society - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake**

**WHEREAS** that the Fraser River delta is unique in Canada due to its large and globally significant migratory bird populations, and its importance as a winter habitat for tens of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds, and the most important area of Canada for wintering raptors; and

**WHEREAS** much of the land that was formerly important bird habitat is being used for highways, rail operations, warehouses and storage facilities for containers, airport expansion, large mansions and estates, greenhouse operations, etc.; and

**WHEREAS** one of Canada's largest and most populous and rapidly growing urban areas is located in the Fraser River delta; and

**WHEREAS** several provincial Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) including Boundary Bay, Serpentine Fen, Sturgeon Bank, South Arm Marshes and the proposed WMA at Roberts Bank, and federal conservation areas (Sea Island Conservation Area, Alaksen National Wildlife Area) are located in the Fraser River delta; and

**WHEREAS** with increased numbers of residents there is an exponentially higher demand for recreational use in Wildlife Management Areas and conservation areas; and

**WHEREAS** many recreational pursuits within the WMA are in direct conflict with the activities of migratory birds, such as feeding, sleeping, and resting, and therefore alienate the birds from their critical habitat; and

**WHEREAS** there are currently no public use regulations on recreation within WMAs and the Sea Island Conservation Area

**WHEREAS** migratory birds, the control of shipping and boating, and the tidal areas of Boundary Bay are all federal responsibilities (Environment Canada and Transport Canada) and jurisdiction over WMAs is a provincial responsibility; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that B.C. Nature urge the BC Minister of forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the federal Minister of Environment and federal Minister of Transportation to begin immediate work together to better protect migratory birds within the provincial WMAs of the Fraser River delta, including Boundary Bay, Serpentine, Sturgeon Bank, South Arm Marshes and the proposed WMA at Roberts Bank, by enacting and strongly enforcing regulations concerning recreational activities such as: motorized boating, kite- and para- surfing, para-buggies and carts, wind-surfing, target shooting, kayaking, and running off-leash dogs, all of which alienate migratory birds from habitats specifically set aside for them; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that B.C. Nature urge the federal Minister of Environment to better protect migratory birds within the federally-owned Sea Island Conservation Area by enacting and strongly enforcing regulations concerning such activities as off-leash dogs, which alienate migratory birds from habitats specifically set aside for them; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that such regulations include the creation of sanctuary areas within the WMAs where none of the above-mentioned activities are ever permitted.

**Resolution 2011-07 Curtailing bycatch from gillnet fisheries in the southern**

**Strait of Georgia** - Submitted by Delta Naturalists' Society - Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake

**WHEREAS** For the last few years the great decline of Fraser River salmon stock has curtailed commercial fishing activities in the southern Strait of Georgia; and

**WHEREAS** a few years ago following a good salmon run, over 900 dead seabirds were counted in the Point Roberts, Washington State, South Delta and Boundary Bay, Delta, B.C. area in one season's survey of beached birds; and

**WHEREAS** autopsies by Environment Canada at that time determined the cause of this seabird mortality to be death by drowning, with a probable cause of gillnet entanglement; and

**WHEREAS** an abundant Fraser River run of sockeye in 2010, caused sea bird bycatch to once again become a problem, with over 100 Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot and Rhinoceros Auklets washing up on the beaches of Point Roberts, Washington State, South Delta and Boundary Bay, Delta, B.C; and

**WHEREAS** there has been a continuing occurrence of bird wrecks in the southern Strait of Georgia during

the salmon fishery; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that B.C. Nature urge the Canadian Minister of Environment, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department, the Director of the Washington State Fish and Wildlife



Department, and other transboundary organizations working in the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound, to work together to put an end to the killing of migratory birds as a bycatch of the gill net fishery in the southern Strait of Georgia.

**Resolution 2011 - 08 Transboundary Species** - Submitted by Vermilion Forks Naturalists –  
Approved May 14, 2011 Williams Lake

**WHEREAS** BC has the highest number of species (wildlife and plants) of any province in Canada, and this biodiversity of species is shared with other jurisdictions, both in Canada and the USA; and

**WHEREAS** these transboundary species make up 96% of the total biodiversity of BC and do not recognize boundaries; and

**WHEREAS** global warming is now an increasing threat affecting many species; and

**WHEREAS** BC has taken some steps to tackle climate change but recognition must be given to the urgent need that laws be created to protect BC's imperiled species and ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS** without effective, cohesive protective measures on both sides of boundaries, BC would be biologically degraded; and

**WHEREAS** already at least 1918 species of distinct populations of wildlife/plants are at risk, due to loss of large portions of critical habitat needed for their survival; and

**WHEREAS** in 1996, federal, provincial (including BC) and territorial governments in Canada signed "The National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk."

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the government of BC to re-affirm their commitments made in 1992, 1993 and 1996, on a national and international stage, to conserve biodiversity, a common concern of humankind, as stated at "The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity," or CBD.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the BC government to recognize that the patchwork of current legislation does not adequately protect species at risk, e.g. protection of habitat and other issues are not included; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that BC Nature requests that the current government improve coordination of conservation of habitat and species at risk between BC and other transboundary jurisdictions.

**Resolution 2012- 01 – Freedom of Information on Scientific Papers**  
Submitted by: Comox Valley Naturalists Society

Freedom of information is critical to a balanced and informed debate on the state of the environment and on public input in environmental decisions. Taxpayers pay for scientific research by Canadians at home and abroad. Until recently every Canadian citizen could access the results of this research either electronically through the National Research Council Press, or in hard copy journals both in public libraries and university libraries which are open to the public. With the recent privatization of the NRC press and the subsequent restriction of access to computer terminals or

electronic library access sites, the public no longer has free access to information it has already paid for.

This restricts the public understanding of science, and unfairly jeopardizes the interests of citizens engaged in environmental defense.

This restriction on freedom of information has led American lawmakers to introduce a bill to reintroduce free public access to scientific research:

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2012/02/lawmakers-reintroduce-publicaccess.html?ref=em>.

Similar concerns are being voiced in Europe.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

As a society committed to conservation science, BCNature must lobby provincial and federal governments to mandate that scientific papers funded with taxpayer money be made freely accessible on the Internet.

### **Resolution 2012 - 02 : South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve -- Continue Feasibility Study Submitted by:**

**WHEREAS** the BC provincial government announced in early 2012 that although the 8 year, multimillion dollar feasibility study for a proposed South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve resulted in the conclusion that the park was feasible, the Province did not feel that there was enough public support at this time, and

**WHEREAS** two scientific polls conducted in the region (2009 Similkameen Valley Planning Society and the 2010 McAllister Public Opinion Research) showed strong local support for a national park, (SVPS showed that less than 20% opposed the national park, and the McAllister poll showed that 63% of local residents support the national park), and

**WHEREAS** the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, representing 3,200 businesses, have written a letter to the Premier expressing their support for the national park, and

**WHEREAS** on the basis of dialogue with Parks Canada staff, most of the ranchers with grazing rights in the proposed park area are interested in continuing discussion with Parks Canada representatives to develop a collaborative model that would ensure the viability of ranches as well as the establishment of the national park, and

**WHEREAS** in February 2012 the four South Okanagan Bands (Lower Similkameen, Osoyoos, Upper Similkameen, and Penticton) with the full support of the Okanagan Nation Alliance Chiefs Executive Council announced that they are seeking a common vision for a Syilx/Parks Canada protected area, and Grand Chief Phillip strongly urged "both the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to revisit their premature and hasty decision to abandon the South Okanagan Park proposal until full consultations have taken place with the First Nations of the south Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, and Okanagan Nation (Syilx)", and

**WHEREAS** the size of park area under consideration has been reduced by excluding Snowy Protected Area, thereby addressing some concerns, and

**WHEREAS** from the ecological perspective there are many urgent reasons for creating this national park, including:

- the unique ecology of a very small and easily disturbed area that will soon be irrevocably altered due to significant human pressures.
- more than 50% of Red and Blue-listed species in the province are dependent on the area and its rapidly diminishing habitat for their survival.
- the importance of the South Okanagan-Similkameen to endangered birds is recognized internationally through the designation of five sites (White Lake, Vaseux Lake, Kilpoola Lake, Osoyoos Oxbows and Chopaka Customs) as nationally significant Important Bird Areas, and

**WHEREAS** the Interior Grasslands ecoprovince of this Feasibility Study, including shrub steppe, Ponderosa Pine forests, and grasslands, is a unique category which Parks Canada has identified should be represented in Canada's national park system, and

**WHEREAS** Parks Canada has the financial resources to purchase private lands from willing sellers, and the Province can transfer unencumbered lands to Parks Canada, to establish the national park, and

**WHEREAS** Parks Canada has the necessary resources to manage the new park to a high ecological standard, and

**WHEREAS** Parks Canada is required by law to protect endangered species and restore critical habitat affording the strong protection necessary to ensure the long-term persistence of the many species in the area that are on the verge of extirpation or extinction due to climate change, population growth, agricultural expansion and resource extraction pressures, and

**WHEREAS** there are well-documented and well-known economic and job development benefits accruing to communities located near national parks, and this could become a park where Canadians and international tourists alike could experience and enjoy the striking scenery as well as the fascinating flora and fauna this region has to offer, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that BC Nature urge the provincial and federal government to complete the Feasibility Study through to its conclusion and formally move to the next stage of national park reserve establishment.

### **Resolution 2012-03: Fraser River Gravel Removal Revisited**

*Submitted by (to be confirmed)*

**WHEREAS** the gradient of the Fraser River declines on its approach to the sea so that the river deposits its gravel load in the reach between Hope and Mission, while the lighter sand is deposited further downriver, and

**WHEREAS** in its natural state the gravel reach of the Fraser is braided with numerous gravel bar islands and side channels and the regular supply and onward movement of gravel within this reach renews aquatic habitats, and

**WHEREAS** the gravel reach and its channel-edge forests nurture a remarkably rich ecosystem, including at least 28 native fish species, some of the world's greatest Oncorhynchid salmon runs, and numerous riparian birds, mammals and amphibians, and

**WHEREAS** net deposition of gravel means that the river slowly raises its bed (aggrades), and that the dyking of the river has accelerated aggradation because the river can no longer distribute gravel over as wide a channel zone as formerly, and

**WHEREAS** raising the gravel bed raises the water surface and as this happens the degree of protection against floods afforded by the dykes declines which presents a major concern to human settlement, and

**WHEREAS** the build-up of gravel remains a slow process, with about 9 cm of aggradation (averaged over the length of the gravel reach) occurring in the second half of the 20th century, reduced significantly to just over 2 cm by gravel extractions since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and

**WHEREAS** removing gravel damages fish habitat, and

**WHEREAS** gravel is sought after for foundation construction material, but is not sufficiently valuable, economically, to justify transporting it a great distance, and

**WHEREAS** in the late 1980s and 1990s gravel removal from the river was accelerated, largely for commercial reasons, but after fisheries authorities raised concerns over destruction of fish habitat, a moratorium was placed on gravel removal to allow time for scientific investigation, and

**WHEREAS** a gravel budget of the river was determined and in 2005, a federal-provincial agreement was reached on an acceptable volume of gravel that could be removed at selected sites, to counteract aggradation, and

**WHEREAS** the amount of gravel designated for removal annually amounted to about twice the estimated gravel influx and the program was meant to be 'experimental' to determine the effectiveness of the strategy, but was not a great success since in most years after 2005, relatively little gravel was actually taken because of continuing concerns over damage to fish habitat, yet in a few years, large volumes were removed, not necessarily from the most appropriate sites, and

**WHEREAS** it has been determined that gravel removal for the purposes of flood control in the attempt to significantly lower river levels, far exceeds the amount that is considered ecologically acceptable to remove, and

**WHEREAS** despite flood concerns, the water level has not been systematically measured along the river, and

**WHEREAS** impacts on the fisheries remain uncertain due to insignificant monitoring, although for areas where gravel was removed, impacts do not appear to be major (with one major exception being the destruction of pink salmon 'nests' at Big Bar in 2007), and

**WHEREAS** this uncertainty is the consequence of insufficient monitoring of the effects of gravel removal, likely because thorough monitoring is an exceptionally expensive exercise, and

**WHEREAS** disagreements amongst public authorities over the direction and effectiveness of the program have again resulted in a moratorium, and

**WHEREAS** recent investigations indicate the need for a new calculation of the ongoing gravel input, due to new research, namely:

- (i) rather than the previous calculation, which assumed a fairly constant and continual downriver movement of gravel, new research suggests that gravel input over the past fifty years has been the result of an exceptionally large down river movement of gravel due to upriver human activities during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the gold mining and other engineering works in the Fraser Canyon and Cariboo regions, and
- (ii) calculations of volume of gravel have perhaps been exaggerated due to the unmeasured sand deposits within the gravel accumulations, and this lighter sand will move further downstream, leaving less total volume of materials in the gravel reach, therefore

**Be It Resolved that** BC Nature call on senior levels of government to continue the moratorium on gravel removal until the gravel budget is better defined so that gravel removals from this worldclass river, with its spawning salmon and rich habitats for numerous species will be done in an ecologically sustainable manner, and

**Be It Further Resolved that** BC Nature call on senior levels of government to appropriately fund:

1. monitoring of the effects of gravel removal as it occurs,
2. monitoring of water levels with respect to flood control concerns, and
3. reassessment of the gravel input to accurately determine the gravel influx for the reach of the Fraser River between Hope and Mission.

## **Resolution 2014-01 Conservation of BC's Grizzly Bear Populations**

*Submitted by Arrowsmith Naturalists*

**WHEREAS** grizzly bears are designated a species of “special concern” by both the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife and BC's Conservation Data Centre; and

**WHEREAS** grizzly bear numbers in many of BC's 56 sub-populations are too low to maintain optimal healthy, genetically-diverse populations; and

**WHEREAS** grizzly bears reproduce at one of the slowest rates of any North American land animals; and

**WHEREAS** grizzly bear populations are particularly sensitive to loss of habitat and human activity; and

**WHEREAS** government estimates of grizzly bear populations do not consistently reflect the use of rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific methodology and yet provide the basis for the limits of allowable human-caused mortality, of which trophy hunting accounts for 88% of the mortalities; and

**WHEREAS** a recent study suggests that in as many as 70% of BC's Grizzly Bear Population Units, allowable mortality limits may have been exceeded; and

**WHEREAS** the provincial government’s 1995 BC Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy has been promised but never implemented;

**Be It Resolved that** that BC Nature urge the BC Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to halt the sport hunting of grizzly bears in British Columbia; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that BC Nature urge the provincial Government departments responsible to recommit to implementing an updated BC Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that BC Nature urges the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) to consider recommending Canada’s grizzly bears a Species At Risk under the federal Species At Risk Act (SARA).

(N.B. Information for this Resolution has been based on “Failing B.C.’s Grizzlies” a report by the David Suzuki Foundation, 2014)

**Resolution 2017-01 : Resolution concerning roadside vegetation management in British Columbia and contravention of the Canadian migratory birds convention act of 1994 and the British Columbia Wildlife act of 1996**

*Submitted by Rosamund Pojar and Janine Lemire on behalf of the Bulkley Valley Naturalists, Smithers, BC, and concerned birders in the Bulkley Valley, BC*

**WHEREAS** the purpose of the Canadian Migratory Bird Convention Act (MBCA) of 1994 is to: Implement the International Convention between Canada and the United States of America by “protecting and conserving migratory birds – as populations and individual birds – and their nests.” (Statutes of Canada c.22)

**And the Act states:**

“no person shall: Disturb, destroy, or take a nest, egg, nest shelter, eider duck box or duck box of a migratory bird” (MBCA Regulations, General Prohibitions, Section 6, Section 5 (9))

**WHEREAS** This Act (MCBA) applies to all Provinces and parts of Provinces of Canada

**WHEREAS** The British Columbia Wildlife Act states:

“A person commits an offence if the person, except as provided by regulation, possesses, takes, injures, molests or destroys

- (a) A bird or its eggs
- (b) The nest of an eagle peregrine falcon, gyrfalcon, osprey, heron or burrowing owl, or
- (c) The nest of a bird not referred to in paragraph (b) when the nest is occupied by a bird or its egg” (Section 34, BC Wildlife Act)

**WHEREAS** The Species at Risk Act (SARA) states that:

“ No person shall damage or destroy the residence of one or more individuals of a wildlife species that is listed as an endangered species or a threatened species, or that is listed as an extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the species into the wild in Canada” (Section 33)

And

**WHEREAS** it has been well documented that migratory birds are declining in numbers (see background document)

And

**WHEREAS** the British Columbia's ministry of transportation and infrastructure's environmental best management practices for highway maintenance states:

“Potential Environmental Impacts” from “Brushing” and “Mowing” “....may disturb birds and their nests” They then present a table showing the required “Performance Standards and Legal Requirements” to prevent disturbance to birds and their nests.

And

**WHEREAS** the British Columbia government is currently in contravention of the above mentioned acts despite repeated requests and opportunities to simply adjust roadside brushing timelines

**Be It Resolved that** BC Nature request that British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, The Honourable Todd Stone:

1. Follow the mandatory law that no highway brushing be carried out during the peak breeding bird season in British Columbia in order to comply with the Migratory Birds Convention Act of 1994 and the British Columbia Wildlife Act of 1996.
2. Assess the peak breeding bird season in geographically explicit regions across British Columbia following Environment and Climate Change Canada's Regional Nesting Period Tables (see <https://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb/default.asp?lang=En&n=4F39A78F-1>) with accompanying maps for each region.
3. Only allow mowing of weeds only when it does not impact woody shrubs, trees and aquatic vegetation in ditches during breeding bird season.

**Be it further resolved that** BC Nature request that, if for any reason the brushing must be carried out, we strongly urge the Ministry to hire a professional ornithologist to assess the area prior to brushing to determine the presence or absence of birds and their nests. In the event that the ornithologist determines there is no risk to breeding birds, the brushing must be carried out within 7 days of the ornithologist's recommended approval for brushing. If brushing is not carried out within this time period, an ornithologist must be hired again to do an additional assessment (see Environment and Climate Change Canada – Nature –Reducing Risk to Migratory Birds, <https://www.ec.gc.ca>)

## **Resolution 2017- 02 : Protection of Our Fossil Heritage**

*Submitted by John Neville, BC Nature Director*

**WHEREAS** British Columbia is the only province in Canada without protective legislation specific to its fossil heritage;

**WHEREAS** B.C.'s fossil heritage is at high risk of being removed from Crown Lands or irrevocably damaged, leading to loss of valuable scientific knowledge; and

**WHEREAS** there is a significant province-wide lack of public awareness of the importance of fossil heritage resources;

**Be It Resolved that** that BC Nature requests the Province of British Columbia to enact and implement effective protective legislation so as to fully protect all fossils within its jurisdiction.

### **Resolution 2017- 03 Un-encapsulated Expanded Polystyrene used as Flotation**

*Submitted by White Rock and Surrey Naturalists*

**WHEREAS** a plastic product called expanded polystyrene (EPS), used in block form, provides economical flotation material in applications such as, but not limited to, fresh and saltwater docks and floats; and

**WHEREAS** expanded polystyrene foam is made of small white grains of plastic that are expanded into beads by steam and then shaped into blocks, with gaps left between the beads; and

**WHEREAS** expanded polystyrene, in contact with water, eventually becomes waterlogged due to the gaps between the beads, resulting in a relatively short useable life; and

**WHEREAS** expanded polystyrene deteriorates when exposed to ultraviolet radiation and by contact with gasoline, oil and other contaminants, and is subject to breakdown from extreme weather conditions and impact by boats and floating debris such as logs; and

**WHEREAS** the expanded polystyrene blocks, pieces, flakes and chips that break off enter the marine and/or freshwater environment causing not only unsightly pollution, but, once broken down into beads and flakes, become a pervasive and unnatural part of the environment (eg. in river bottoms, banks, sea beds and soil) for which there is no existing method of removal; and

**WHEREAS** the expanded polystyrene breaks into ever smaller pieces, and, in its smallest forms, can endanger invertebrates, fish (including salmonids) and waterfowl that mistake it for food; and

**WHEREAS** there is no existing Canadian legislation, provincial or federal, which requires the usage of any of the various methods of encapsulation available; and

**WHEREAS** there is abundant precedence for encapsulation legislation in jurisdictions outside Canada, including the U.S. states that share our waters;

**Be it Resolved** that BC Nature urge the Ministry of the Environment and its provincial counterparts to enact legislation that bans the use of un-encapsulated expanded polystyrene in all new and replacement dock facilities, public and private, in all freshwater, estuarine and marine environments; and

**Be it Further Resolved** that BC Nature urge the Ministry of the Environment to establish an acceptable and effective standard of encapsulation; and

**Be it Also Resolved** that BC Nature urge the Ministry of the Environment and its provincial counterparts to enact legislation governing the transition of all public and private dock facilities using un-encapsulated expanded polystyrene to approved encapsulated expanded polystyrene in a timely fashion and that legislation also be enacted governing the recycling and/or disposal of expanded polystyrene and encapsulation materials.

### **Resolution 2017- 04 BC Nature Position Paper on Climate Change**

*Submitted by the BC Nature Conservation Committee*



*(please note that this differs from our regular conservation resolutions, which are normally addressed to government. This was accepted for discussion and consideration by our BC Nature members to develop a statement of position on climate change)*

**WHEREAS** anthropogenic alteration of the earth's atmosphere is causing global temperature to rise at an unprecedented rate, and

**WHEREAS** the resulting anthropogenic climate change is manifesting itself in increasingly frequent extreme weather events affecting land and water, and

**WHEREAS** anthropogenic climate change will increasingly lead to profound disruption of ecosystems, a reduction in global biodiversity, and an increase in human social instability,

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature support on a case-by-case basis, the actions, policies, initiatives and organizations that promote the global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by taking ecologically responsible measures to slow or mitigate climate change.

### **Resolution 2017- 05 Reinstatement of Passenger Rail Service between Vancouver and Lillooet and on to Prince George**

*Submitted by the Lillooet Naturalists*

**WHEREAS**, the passenger rail service is less damaging to the natural environment, compared with vehicles on the highways, between Vancouver and Lillooet and on to Prince George,

**WHEREAS**, the provincial government is having difficulty meeting its climate change goals, as announced by our Premier at the Paris climate change summit,

**WHEREAS**, the rail line already exists and passes through spectacular BC scenery, giving passengers a chance to 'enjoy Nature' along the way,

**WHEREAS**, the passenger rail service has the potential to bring low impact tourism to towns and cities along the route, many of which have experienced economic downturns over the past few years,

**WHEREAS**, the very limited passenger rail service already available between Seton Portage and Lillooet is extremely popular, demonstrating considerable interest from tourists from across the world , as illustrated by a BBC article that generated international demand for local rail tourism,

**WHEREAS**, BC Nature members have also enjoyed this present passenger rail service as part of BC Nature camps in Lillooet, and booked up early on for the passenger rail trip as part of the AGM this May 2017 ,reflecting a keen interest in our naturalist group for this service,

**WHEREAS**, Mayors and Chiefs and Councils along the rail line have also been advocating for a return of the passenger rail service as an important service to communities along this route,

**Be it resolved** that BC Nature urge the British Columbia government, and in particular the Ministry of Transportation, to reinstate the passenger rail service between Vancouver and communities to the north including Lillooet.

**Resolution 2017-01 : Resolution concerning roadside vegetation management in British Columbia and contravention of the Canadian migratory birds convention act of 1994 and the British Columbia Wildlife act of 1996**

*Submitted by Rosamund Pojar and Janine Lemire on behalf of the Bulkley Valley Naturalists, Smithers, BC, and concerned birders in the Bulkley Valley, BC*

**WHEREAS** the purpose of the Canadian Migratory Bird Convention Act (MBCA) of 1994 is to:

Implement the International Convention between Canada and the United States of America by “protecting and conserving migratory birds – as populations and individual birds – and their nests.” (Statutes of Canada c.22)

**And the Act states:**

“no person shall: Disturb, destroy, or take a nest, egg, nest shelter, eider duck box or duck box of a migratory bird” (MBCA Regulations, General Prohibitions, Section 6, Section 5 (9))

**WHEREAS** This Act (MCBA) applies to all Provinces and parts of Provinces of Canada

**WHEREAS** The British Columbia Wildlife Act states:

“A person commits an offence if the person, except as provided by regulation, possesses, takes, injures, molests or destroys

(d) A bird or its eggs

(e) The nest of an eagle peregrine falcon, gyrfalcon, osprey, heron or burrowing owl, or

(f) The nest of a bird not referred to in paragraph (b) when the nest is occupied by a bird or its egg” (Section 34, BC Wildlife Act)

**WHEREAS** The Species at Risk Act (SARA) states that:

“ No person shall damage or destroy the residence of one or more individuals of a wildlife species that is listed as an endangered species or a threatened species, or that is listed as an extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the species into the wild in Canada” (Section 33)

And

**WHEREAS IT HAS BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED THAT MIGRATORY BIRDS ARE DECLINING IN NUMBERS** (see background document)

And

**WHEREAS THE BRITISH COLUMBIA’S MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE’S ENVIRONMENTAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STATES:**

“Potential Environmental Impacts” from “Brushing” and “Mowing” “....may disturb birds and their nests” They then present a table showing the required “Performance Standards and Legal Requirements” to prevent disturbance to birds and their nests.

and

**WHEREAS THE BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTS DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SIMPLY ADJUST ROADSIDE BRUSHING TIMELINES**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature** request that British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, The Honourable Todd Stone:

4. Follow the mandatory law that no highway brushing be carried out during the peak breeding bird season in British Columbia in order to comply with the Migratory Birds Convention Act of 1994 and the British Columbia Wildlife Act of 1996.
5. Assess the peak breeding bird season in geographically explicit regions across British Columbia following Environment and Climate Change Canada's Regional Nesting Period Tables (see <https://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb/default.asp?lang=En&n=4F39A78F-1>) with accompanying maps for each region.
6. Only allow mowing of weeds only when it does not impact woody shrubs, trees and aquatic vegetation in ditches during breeding bird season.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** that BC Nature request that, if for any reason the brushing must be carried out, we strongly urge the Ministry to hire a professional ornithologist to assess the area prior to brushing to determine the presence or absence of birds and their nests. In the event that the ornithologist determines there is no risk to breeding birds, the brushing must be carried out within 7 days of the ornithologist's recommended approval for brushing. If brushing is not carried out within this time period, an ornithologist must be hired again to do an additional assessment (see Environment and Climate Change Canada – Nature –Reducing Risk to Migratory Birds, <https://www.ec.gc.ca>)

## **BRIEFING DOCUMENT**

### **RESOLUTION CONCERNING ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND CONTRAVENTION OF THE CANADIAN MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT OF 1994 AND THE BRITISH COLUMBIA WILDLIFE ACT OF 1996**

In early 2016, residents and birders in northwest BC observed roadside clearing and brushing happening during peak breeding bird season. Concerned birders immediately contacted the local Ministry of Transportation (MoT - the Ministry responsible for roadside vegetation management) and asked them to postpone their activities during breeding bird season. The birding community has made this request to MoT continuously for several years and have explained that it is an offence under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (MBCA). Only on one occasion did Ministry staff from Fish and Wildlife postpone the brushing along the Morice River Road until the breeding bird season was over. It is clear that communities cannot rely on the Provincial Ministry staff to monitor this as they are simply understaffed and underfunded to carry out this work.

It is also concerning that *Breeding Bird Surveys* and other data collection methods used by both the Provincial and Federal governments to determine the status of our birds are conducted at the same time as the Ministry of Transportation is cutting down the brush that some of the birds are nesting in.

Despite repeated complaints and concerns, the Ministry of Transportation continues to issue contracts to do the brushing during the peak breeding season for birds which is mid-May to mid-July. This past spring (2016) they brushed roads throughout the Bulkley Valley area during June.

On the latest occasion (June 2016), BC Conservation Officers (C.O.'s) were contacted about the brushing along Viewmount Road, Smithers. Only after a warning from the C.O.'s did the brushing

cease. It is the Ministry of Transportation that makes the decisions (not the Contractors) around timing windows. There are not enough C.O's to monitor and enforce this issue. It would be far more effective for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to adopt the mandatory practice of inhibit all roadside brushing during peak breeding bird season.

We have been told that the Ministry likes to do the brushing when the leaves have all flushed to maximize the impact of their brushing. We would argue that the maximum negative impact on the regeneration of much of the "brush" would be achieved by brushing later in the season when all the food reserves of the plants have gone into leaf production as well as flower and seed production. Plants accumulate reserves in their roots in the fall and use up the reserves the following year in order to successfully reproduce. Hence for most species their food reserves are lowest at the time of flowering and seed production. Clearly this will vary from species to species. We would like to suggest that brushing later in the season may actually be more effective for reducing the regeneration of many roadside vegetation species

It is important to be clear that roadside vegetation management is important for a number of reasons and for the purposes of this resolution, we are asking that roadside brushing continue with the least impact to our declining bird populations. This would drastically reduce the harm to birds and their nests and eggs. This would also eliminate the continuous contravention of the Canadian and Provincial Acts described in the resolution.

We suggest that brushing, if it has to be done, be done in either April or after July 31. A good guideline as to whether or not the season has started or is over, is to listen to see if the birds are singing. If there is a lot of bird song, it means the birds are on territory and have nests. Searching for nests is not recommended for several reasons:

- a) Nests are extremely difficult to find (birds do not want their predators to find their nests so most are extremely well camouflaged)
- b) Looking for nests is likely to do more harm than good (see the recommendation from Environment Canada – [*Environment and Climate Change Canada – Nature - Reducing the Risk to Migratory Birds* <https://www.ec.gc.ca> ] )
- c) Removal of nests after breeding season has little or no effect on the bird's ability to nest again. Most birds build a new nest every year with the exception of a few species e.g. Great Blue Heron which uses the same nest year after year.

### **Background information on the two Acts**

Migratory Birds Convention Act 1994 - Game Officers (i.e. Conservation Officers) can issue a compliance order if he/she believes that a person is contravening the Act and its Regulations (see Section 11.21 subsection 1). Persons subject to order (of compliance) are

#### **Section 11.21 (MBCA)**

##### **(2) Subsection (1) applies to any person who**

- a) **Owns or has the charge, management or control of the substance to which the alleged contravention relates or the property on which the substance is located.**
- b) **Causes or contributes to the alleged contravention** – this suggests that the Ministry of Transportation, their workers and their contractors may be liable for contravention of the Act
- c) **Is likely to cause or contribute to the alleged contravention**

The order can instruct the person to cease the activity for a specified period and refrain from doing anything in contravention of the Act.

**The maximum penalty for every person that commits an offence is a fine up to \$1 million or imprisonment for a term of not more than 3 years or both upon conviction on indictment and up to \$ 300,000 or imprisonment of not more than 6 months, or both, upon summary conviction.**

The parties to the offence are described in Section 1.2 of Penalties in MBCA

*Section 1.2 If a corporation commits an offence under this Act, any director, officer, agent or mandatory of the corporation who directed, authorized, assented to, acquiesced in or participated in the commission of the offence is a party to the offence, and is liable on conviction to the penalty provided by this Act, whether or not the corporation is prosecuted for the offence.*

**The Convention** is described in the Schedule attached to the MBCA Act and outlines Canada's International Commitment to Migratory Birds.

### **BC Wildlife Act**

Exemptions to Section 34 of the BC Wildlife Act are as follows:

“11.3 (1) A person is exempt from Section 34 of the Wildlife Act with respect to possessing, taking, injuring, molesting, or destroying a bird or its egg or a nest occupied by a bird or its egg if the bird is not designated as wildlife, a threatened species or an endangered species (where wildlife is listed under Schedule A)”

Schedule A of the BC Wildlife Act lists birds of the following species:

“all species of birds described in the American Ornithologist's Union Checklist of North American Birds, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (American Ornithologist's Union 1999) or its supplements, which are native to Canada or the United States of America and were not introduced by man”

and

“(2) Despite subsection (1), a person is exempt from section 34 of the Wildlife Act with respect to taking, injuring, molesting or destroying a bird or its egg or a nest occupied by a bird or its egg if the bird is listed in Schedule C.”

Schedule C includes species that are not native to B.C. or have been specifically designated as problems e.g. brown-headed cowbird (BC Wildlife Act current to July 6, 2016)

### **BC Wildlife Act (Fines and Penalties)**

Section 84 (1) states “for purpose of determining the fines and penalties to which a person is subject on conviction for an offence under this Act,”

(b) “subsections (3) and (4) apply in relation to an offence under Section 34”

(3) states “Subject to subsection (4), a person who commits an offence referred to in subsection (1) (b) is liable

(a) on a first conviction, to a fine of not more than \$100 000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both, and

(b) on each subsequent conviction for the same offence or another offence referred to in subsection (1) (b), to a fine of not more than \$200 000 and not less than \$2 000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, or both.”

(4) states “Despite subsection (3) (a), if the person referred to in that subsection has previously been convicted of an offence referred to in subsection (1) (a), the person is liable to the punishment set out in subsection (3) (b).”

### **Declining Migratory Birds**

1. One third of all North American Bird Species need Urgent Conservation Action
2. Of these, 73 species are birds of the Boreal Forest, 144 species are birds of Temperate Forests, 45 species are Grassland species – all habitats described as the Major Habitats in British Columbia
3. Other species occupying Arid Lands (e.g. Okanagan), and Wetlands and Alpine Tundra (i.e., habitats found throughout BC) are also listed as being of concern.  
(North American Bird Conservation Initiative, 2016. *The State of American Birds*. 2016. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. 8 pages [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org))

See also Environment Canada and Climate Change – Nature – Reducing Risk to Migratory Birds <https://ec.gc.ca>

### **British Columbia’s Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Best Management Practices**

Section 5-10 Roadside Vegetation Management, Potential Environmental Issues clearly states that “Brushing” and “Mowing” .... “may disturb birds and their nests”  
It then lists “Performance Standards and Legal Requirements” which include offences under both the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the BC Wildlife Act.  
([http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BCHighways/contracts/maintenance/Schedule\\_21\\_Maintenance\\_Specifications.pdf](http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BCHighways/contracts/maintenance/Schedule_21_Maintenance_Specifications.pdf))

NOTE: It should be mandatory that a qualified ornithologist does a “walk through” of the area as it is unlikely that Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure staff and/ or their contractors are qualified to do a proper assessment.

### **Lack of education**

We think that there should be a concerted effort made to educate the public on this issue as they can act as surrogate monitors of contravention and can report brushing during critical time periods. Most people are not aware that the MBCA exists or even that the BC Wildlife Act protects birds

### **Resolution 2018-01 - Banning the Use of Lead in Ammunition and Fishing Gear. Submitted by the Bulkley Valley Naturalists**

#### **Motion:**

**WHEREAS** the Canadian government has taken action to protect Canadians from lead exposure by stopping the use of lead in gasoline and paint;

**WHEREAS** Environment Canada banned the use of lead shot for hunting most migratory game bird species in 1999;

**WHEREAS** lead shot and ammunition and lead fishing gear continue to be allowed for fishing and hunting activities that do not involve migratory game bird species;

**WHEREAS** scientific studies show that the continued use of lead-based ammunition and fishing gear poses significant health risks to humans and wildlife;<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS** research shows that lead causes harm at far lower levels of exposure than was previously recognized and the World Health Organization has concluded that there is “no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe”;<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS** a statement released by scientists and health experts in the United States in 2013 notes that lead hunting ammunition poses a serious danger to people and wildlife and should be phased out;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS** the Centre for Biological Diversity, the American Bird Conservancy, and other conservation, hunting, and veterinarian groups in the United States have submitted a Petition to the US Environmental Protection Agency, which provides detailed scientific evidence on harm caused to wildlife and humans by the use of lead shot, bullets, and fishing sinkers and calls for them to be banned under the US Toxic Substances Control Act;<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS** research has determined that ingestion of small lead fishing sinkers and jigs is a major cause of death in breeding common loons in eastern Canada and the United States;<sup>5</sup>

**WHEREAS** non-lead ammunition and non-lead fishing jigs and lures are available, are effective and cost only slightly more;<sup>6</sup>

**WHEREAS** in 2004, Canada's Minister of the Environment announced the government's intention to prohibit the import, manufacture and sale of lead fishing weights in Canada;<sup>7</sup>

**WHEREAS** the state of California is phasing in a ban on lead ammunition by 2019 and many EU countries and U.S. states have restrictions on the use of lead ammunition and lead in fishing gear.

**WHEREAS** Denmark has moved to ban lead ammunition.

**Be it resolved that BC Nature call on the Canadian government to:**

- Take action to eliminate the use of lead in ammunition and fishing gear.
- Collaborate with indigenous communities, the provinces, non-governmental organizations and commercial interests, to introduce an action plan to phase out the use of lead in ammunition and fishing gear.
- Initiate an educational strategy and a fund to assist in the transition to non-lead ammunition and fishing gear.

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### **Resolution 2019-01: Wells Gray Mountain Caribou**

Submitted by Nancy Flood & Gary Hunt, Kamloops Naturalist Club

**WHEREAS** Southern Mountain Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) (SMC) have been listed as Threatened under the Species at Risk Act since 2003 and a federal recovery strategy was posted in 2014;<sup>1,4</sup>

**WHEREAS** SMC numbers have declined drastically over the last 20 years, from about 2500 in 18 herds in 1994 to about 156 animals existing in 13 herds in 2014;<sup>2,3,4</sup> T.Goward pers comm and all of these herds continue to decline in size:

**WHEREAS** the Wells Gray Caribou herd, specifically, has declined from an estimated 336 animals in 1995<sup>16</sup>, to 242 in 2006, to about 111 currently and is projected to continue declining;<sup>5,6,16</sup>

**WHEREAS** The evidence is clear that although predation is currently a major cause of population declines in SMC, this problem has originated with, and continues to be exacerbated by, human disturbance, particularly as it results in habitat loss;<sup>3,7,8,9,10,11,15</sup>

**WHEREAS** culling predators, use of maternity pens, and translocations may assist in the short term preservation of some SMC populations, research shows that these measures are expensive, must include about 60% of females to be effective, and will need to be continued in perpetuity for at least five or six decades post logging for populations that are not self-sustaining; and that maintenance of sufficient habitat for the population is critical for the maintenance and hoped-for growth of caribou populations;<sup>3,5,11,12,25</sup>

**WHEREAS** low population density by itself exacerbates the effect of all these other issues for SMC (i.e., they experience Allee effects), such that capita growth rates decrease with declining population density;<sup>13,14</sup>

**WHEREAS** in April 2017, BC Nature, along with other groups made legal application to the federal government under Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) for an Emergency



Protection Order to ban Canfor's proposed logging in caribou habitat adjacent to Wells Gray Park; they argued that this logging was occurring in habitat designated as critical habitat for SMC;<sup>16</sup>

**WHEREAS** in June 2018, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada declared that there was "imminent threat" to 10 SMC populations (Local Population Units, or LPUs)—those under 100 animals in size, which would not be considered "self-sustaining." Even though the report acknowledged that "No estimate of minimum viable population (MVP) size exists for SMC," research on the Boreal Caribou (which have a different migratory pattern) was used to define "Self-sustaining" for SMC: as: (1) "the LPU on average *demonstrates stable or positive population growth over the short term (≤20 years)*, and is large enough to withstand random events and persist over the long term (≥50 years), without the need for ongoing active management intervention; and (2) there is an increase to at least 100 caribou within LPUs that currently consist of fewer than 100 caribou, and there is *no reduction in the number of caribou within LPUs that currently consist of over 100 caribou;*"<sup>17</sup> (italics ours).

**WHEREAS** despite this declaration of imminent threat, no Emergency Protection Order (which would have stopped further logging etc.) was issued, 3 of the 10 populations described above are now extirpated<sup>3,18</sup> and, according to many sources, 83 + 314 = 397 logging permits have been issued within the ranges of the endangered herds since June 2018;<sup>19,20,21,26,27</sup> Although scientific evidence surrounding the reasons for the decline of SMC is abundant, campaigns of denial have clouded the issue in the public's eyes and delayed an appropriate response;<sup>24</sup>

**WHEREAS** the best hope for the recovery of SMC may lie with herds such as the two herds that overlap with Wells Gray Park: they face less risk of the deleterious effects of genetic drift, inbreeding and stochastic events than smaller herds<sup>22,23</sup>; and their possibility for long-term viability is greatly increased compared to that of any other remaining herds by the fact that much of their range is currently protected;

**BE IT RESOLVED that BC Nature call on the governments of British Columbia and Canada to:**

Apply the precautionary principle and take all necessary steps to halt timber harvesting in the range of both the Wells Gray Park South and the Wells Gray Park North herds of SMC; this includes harvesting in the matrix areas as outlined by the 2014 Environment Canada Recovery Strategy for SMC.

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**Resolution 2020-001 - Ecological Reserves System of British Columbia  
Submitted by Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS)**

**WHEREAS** in 1971, the British Columbia Legislature gave unanimous approval to the [Ecological Reserve Act](#), thus becoming the first province in Canada to formalize, acknowledge the benefits of, and give permanent protected status to ecological reserves; and

**WHEREAS** the *Ecological Reserve Act* of 1971 enabled the creation of 148 Ecological Reserves across B.C. ([http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco\\_reserve/alphalist.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco_reserve/alphalist.html)) as part of a Protected Area system specifically to protect representative examples of the ecosystem types in B.C. as well as rare species and special features of biological and geological importance, for scientific study and educational purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, the BC Government holds primary stewardship responsibility for the B.C. Protected Areas system, including Ecological Reserves, and that all British Columbians currently derive economic, social, cultural, health and environmental benefits from these areas; and

**WHEREAS** climate change, increased resource activities and expanding human populations place greater pressures and create greater uncertainty on the sustainability of the species and ecosystems in Canada's most ecologically diverse province. Reducing uncertainty can be aided over time if there is a sustained monitoring and research program in its protected areas, including Ecological Reserves, so that adaptation strategies are informed by scientific understanding of trends and thresholds; and

**WHEREAS** the concept behind Ecological Reserves when endorsed in the 1970s was that science-based approaches are a fundamental key to understanding how to sustain B.C.'s natural bio and eco-diversity, and so, with today's awareness of climate change effects on nature, Ecological Reserves remain relevant today, and in fact, are now even more urgently needed; and

**WHEREAS** most Ecological Reserves were specifically designated as research and monitoring sites, these activities have not been consistently pursued by government or promoted to universities and colleges in the last 40 years, i.e., since the early 1980s; and

**WHEREAS** there are approved management plans for all Ecological Reserves, there has been little to no implementation by BC Parks of these Ecological Reserve plans since the 1980s, and thus, instead of serving as natural area benchmarks in research and monitoring studies, many Ecological Reserves are suffering environmental degradation from a variety of threats due to lack of maintenance and stewardship actions; and

**WHEREAS** traditional land use by Indigenous Peoples is generally permitted in Ecological Reserves, stewardship actions by Indigenous Ecological Reserve wardens and Indigenous groups is welcomed, and Ecological Reserves provide opportunities for the maintenance and application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and co-management, therefore the establishment of new Ecological Reserves and maintenance of existing Ecological Reserves could help support the BC government's efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); and

**WHEREAS** the current 148 Ecological Reserves do not form an adequate network of study areas to represent the diversity in B.C.'s Ecoregions and Ecological Zones, nor areas that serve as examples of ecosystems that have been modified by human beings, and that new discoveries of significant botanical, zoological and geological features and rare or endangered native plants and animals in their natural habitat are still being made, a clear process is needed to set aside specific areas of land to create a more robust Ecological Reserve network that incorporates newly discovered significant areas and features and helps the Province meet its provincial, national and international commitments for biodiversity conservation, species at risk protection, and Indigenous stewardship; and

**WHEREAS**, the Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) presented to the BC Government a list of worthy candidate Ecological Reserves in 2014 with a reminder in 2017, none of these areas have been officially added to the Ecological Reserve system; and

**WHEREAS** the total area of land set aside for Ecological Reserves in B.C. is 112, 543 ha in terrestrial reserves plus 51,731 ha in marine reserves, and that Ecological Reserves tend to be small, they do not alienate large tracts of land from economic development. However, they protect ecologic, biologic and geologic resources of great environmental value and their placement can be strategic so that they contribute to provincial environmental goals related to biodiversity and heritage conservation, climate change action (mitigation and adaptation), Indigenous stewardship, and evidence-based policy. Thus, the long-term comprehensive benefits of protecting these resources exceeds the short-term economic benefits of resource use that would destroy these resources.

**WHEREAS** the present Ecological Reserve system of 148 reserves currently comprises 0.008% of the BC Parks Protected Area System and one percent of Crown lands set aside as Ecological Reserves is needed to increase the probability of sustaining ecosystems currently in B.C. and limit irreparable biological losses in a period of rapid climate change. An expanded world-class Ecological Reserve system could help the BC Government achieve biodiversity conservation commitments, inform climate change adaptation strategies and augment Indigenous stewardship opportunities. Setting a one percent target would mean an 80-fold increase in the area protected by Ecological Reserves over the current Ecological Reserve system (approximately 1 million ha in size).

**Be it resolved that BC Nature urges the BC Government put in place a clear process to add new Ecological Reserves to the system with a schedule for management plan completion and implementation established where gaps exist in ecosystem representation or significant biological (botanical, zoological, genetic) or geological features, and**

**Be it further resolved** that BC Nature urges the BC Government to establish a target of setting aside one percent of Crown lands as Ecological Reserves to represent and protect fragile ecosystems, culturally modified ecosystems and features, rare and endangered species, and significant biological and geological features, in this period of rapid climate change, and

**Be it further resolved** that BC Nature urges BC Parks to commit to maintaining the current system of Ecological Reserves by completing and implementing approved Ecological Reserve management plans in a timely fashion, and

**Be it further resolved** that BC Nature urges the BC government to facilitate research in Ecological Reserves by forming partnerships with universities, colleges, research institutions, ENGOs, and Indigenous peoples to get research projects, TEK studies, and baseline biodiversity inventories completed, periodically updated, communicated and used to inform land uses, management practices and climate change adaptation strategies across the broader landscape, and

**Be it further resolved** that BC Nature urges BC Parks to support the volunteer stewardship efforts of Ecological Reserve wardens as well as ENGO and Indigenous partners in Ecological Reserves by taking action to address threats to Ecological Reserves that they identify, providing opportunities

for training and communicating, and supporting specific stewardship projects with in-kind support and where possible, funds.

**2022-01 – Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement  
Submitted by Nature Chilliwack**

**Whereas** First Nations have inhabited British Columbia for millennia, making a living from nature in a sustainable manner and exemplifying the motto, “know nature and keep it worth knowing.”

**Be it Resolved** that BC Nature and its federated clubs acknowledge this occupancy at events (including meetings, conferences, and field trips) and in publications (including pamphlets, brochures, and lists of nature viewing places) with a statement acknowledging the territories of the local First Nations.