

### **Annual General Meeting October 19, 1997**

The Alberta Greens annual general meeting was held on October 19, 1997 in Red Deer. This meeting allowed a free exchange of opinions on a variety of topics among Greens from Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton and Athabasca. The meeting was enhanced by the presence of the Green Party of Canada Leader Joan Russow.

Elections were held for the positions of President, Treasurer and Secretary. Since only the current office-holders were nominated, they were re-elected by acclamation. The position of leader, currently held by David Parker, will become open at the 1998 AGM.

Some of the issues discussed during the meeting were opposition to a proposed hog slaughtering plant in Lethbridge, pesticides in Calgary [see related article below], attempts to quietly privatize public lands [see related article below], the problems of logging & pulp production and subsidies to businesses by the Alberta Government.

The next AGM has been scheduled for September 18-20, 1998 at Gull Lake Camp, near Lacombe (with time to be shared with the Green Party of Canada in Alberta and the G.A.I.A. society).

### **Fight for Kananaskis!**

The Alberta government is starting a second round of public consultation on its review of the K-Country Recreation Policy. Have your say by writing to:

Praxis Consulting  
2215 - 19th Street, SW  
Calgary, AB, T2T 4X1  
(403) 245-6404

### **Greens Oppose Pesticide Use Near Calgary's Rivers**

Four environmentalists appealed a pesticide spraying license granted to the City of Calgary in July 1997 that allows spraying of pesticides within 30 meters of rivers and other bodies of water by the City of Calgary. The license allows general spraying along Nose Creek and the southern part of the Bow River, and spot spraying for Purple Loosestrife virtually anywhere in Calgary. Fungicide application on a City owned golf course near a water hazard is also covered by the license. The appeal involved Fay Ash and David Swann of Healthy Calgary and Don Munroe and David Crowe of the Alberta Greens. All four acted in this case as private citizens.

The appeal went to a preliminary hearing on October 23, 1997, where the province and the city tried to deny the appellants standing by arguing that their case was frivolous, that they were not directly affected and that the Environmental Appeal Board did not have jurisdiction. Only the "directly affected" argument appeared to strike a chord with the board. A decision on whether to allow the appeal to go forward to a full hearing is expected within a month.

### **Alberta's Public Lands**

Condensed from a fact sheet by Cliff Wallis, Past President, Alberta Wilderness Association:

20 locations for public meetings and open houses have been announced by the Alberta government's Agricultural Lease Review Committee.

Public Lands in Alberta have some of the best grassland and aspen parkland

habitats and wilderness left anywhere in the world. We are urging Albertans to demand more say over public land management and a focus on environmental protection not agricultural production.

These meetings will be held from October 20th, 1997 in Southern Alberta through November 24th in Northern Alberta. To find out if there is still time to appear at a hearing, phone the free RITE line at (403) 310-0000 and then enter 427-3595 at the prompt. Even if you miss your local meeting, you can still write to:

Roger Marvin  
Agricultural Lease  
Review Committee  
J.G. O'Donoghue Building,  
Room 307, 7000 - 113 Street  
Edmonton, T6H 5T6

or

Premier Ralph Klein  
and  
your MLA at:  
Legislature Bldg,  
10800 97 Ave  
Edmonton T5K 2B6

People should see these meetings as a 'bitch session' and not a proper public hearing process on public lands! The review committee is to release an interim report on this public input for comment in 1998.

### **Current Problems**

Day-to-day Public Lands management resides in an agriculturally focused agency with no ties to the conservation community. The current situation is leading to *de facto* private lands different from all other public lands. There are increasing restrictions on public access – even biologists working on con-

tract for the Alberta Government have been denied access. In contrast, Forest Reserves, Ecological Reserves and Provincial Parks have a grazing permit system with no restrictions on public foot access.

There is no public process for the sale of Tax Recovery Lands – these have been catalogued for 75 years as Crown lands, have been managed as Crown lands, and are legally Crown lands. A political decision was made to transfer them to counties if they asked. There is also no public process on the privatization of Grazing Reserves.

The Agriculture Lease Review Process is not stakeholder driven, has a narrow focus – not the broad Public Lands Policy process that was asked for, and which was promised by former Environment ministers and the Premier. There is scant attention given to biodiversity, ecosystem and wilderness values.

### A Better Process

The AWA is asking for a stakeholder driven process with representation from different sectors, reporting directly to Cabinet. Many different interest groups should be represented including:

- Academic
- Legal
- Resource Economic
- Rural Municipalities
- Special Areas
- Hunters & Fishermen (e.g. Alberta Fish & Game)
- Habitat Conservation (e.g. Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited)
- Environmentalists (e.g. FAN, CPAWS, AWA)
- Ranchers with and without leases
- Energy (e.g. CAPP)
- Range Management
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Tourism

A stakeholder process is needed because previous similar (i.e. closed) processes in 1987 and 1990 failed. A broader process would result in broader

support, and many issues that have long been identified might get resolution. Sectoral representation would allow groups to engage in constructive dialog and seek consensus. This worked well in the Water Management Advisory Committee even though some visionary environmental protection recommendations were not adopted by government.

### Desired Outcome

The Alberta Environment Network groups want sustainable ecosystems in Alberta's grassland and parkland regions; valued ecosystem components protected; sustainable and diverse economic benefits derived from Public Lands and sustainable rural communities.

Contact the AWA at (403) 283-2025 in Calgary or the AEN at (403) 433-9305 for more information.

## Canadian Green News

**British Columbia** • Jack Ross was jailed in Kamloops for over 60 days for blockading the logging of domestic watersheds in the Slokan Valley. Stuart Parker, leader of the BC Green Party was also arrested for manning a blockade that was intended to stop construction of a logging road. To support these protests, Wally du Temple of the provincial Green Party organized a July 31, 1997 demonstration outside the Victoria legislature including a chain saw and a 6-foot, 2-man ripsaw.

**Ontario** • Steve Harvey ran for the Green Party of Ontario in the September 4, 1997 by-election in Windsor-Riverside. He obtained 327 votes, for 1.5% of the votes cast.

Shelly Lipsey ran for the Green Party in the by-election in the Toronto riding of Oriol on the same day, receiving 96 votes. Her campaign suffered from late summer disinterest and the absence of any all-candidates meetings.

A third candidate, Gene Villeneuve, ran in the Ottawa West by-election.

## International Green News

**Mexico** • The Partido Verde (Green Ecological Party of Mexico) received 4% of the popular vote in recent elections for national deputies, winning 10 seats. They received 4.25% of the vote for federal senators, winning one seat. They received 6.95% of the vote for governor of Mexico City and 8.95% for deputies in the capital, winning 5 seats.

In local races outside Mexico City, several deputies were elected in the states of Queratato, Guanajuate and Edo. de Mexico. Green governments were elected in 5 municipalities. In total, 40 Green city councillors were elected.

In total over a million Mexicans voted Green!

**Brazil** • The Brazilian Green Party has one elected Federal Deputy (Fernando Gabeira in Rio de Janeiro) and the elected Governor of Espirito Santo state (Victor Buaiz).

**Ecuador** • Horizonte Verde ("Green Horizons") has recently formed as a political party in Ecuador. The leader is Efrain Alvarez (Address: Amazonas 3731, Of. 101 De. Amazonas, Park Torre 1, Casilla Pota 17-17-1319, Quito, Phone: (5932) 250.052).

**New Zealand** • 20 Greens hold elected positions, including Sukhi Turner, Mayor of Dunedin. Their International Secretary is Rosalie Steward (email: Rosejohn@xtra.co.nz).

## Pesticides Invade Homes

"[In 1996,] the EPA [US Environmental Protection Agency] reported that it had conducted a test of herbicides and found that the level of contamination found *inside* homes after *outdoor* spraying was 10 to 100 times stronger than what was found outside. Brought in on shoes and by pets, the floor and carpet concentrations were astronomical and readily picked up by children from direct dermal contact as well as orally."

Richard Alexander  
The Alexander Law Firm

## What's Wrong with Special Places 2000?

Excerpts from a February 1997 letter sent to Alberta Environmental 'Protection' Minister Ty Lund summarize what is wrong with the Alberta government's Special Places 2000 initiative, originally designed to save representative ecosystems in the province.

Dear Mr. Lund:

We wish to advise you of our serious concern that the Government of Alberta's Special Places 2000 programme is no longer capable of accomplishing its stated goal of a completed protected areas network for Alberta. The programme as it currently exists is undermined by a series of weaknesses in the policy underlying it.

As you know CPAWS was initially reluctant to accept your invitation to take part in the Special Places 2000 process through representation on the programme's Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC). In time, however, we were given to believe that this committee would be the critical body for the consideration of the development of a protected areas network for Alberta.

We felt that our involvement with that body would be an important means by which we could have meaningful input into the policy process. We were encouraged in this view by you and members of your office.

Representatives of CPAWS have now played an active role on the PCC for some 18 months. In that time we have been impressed with the good will and dedication of the majority of the stakeholders. The Committee has done much to foster mutual understanding among groups historically at odds. Unfortunately, government policy has incrementally limited the options available for consideration by the PCC, and has diminished its role in the process.

[The following] aspects of the Special

## ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

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Leader	David Parker	(403) 469-1448
President	David Crowe	(403) 289-6609
Secretary	Madeleine Oldershaw	(403) 282-4788
Treasurer	Pam Munroe	(403) 245-3441

### Meetings

For information on meeting dates, times and locations, call Madeleine Oldershaw in Calgary, or David Parker in Edmonton.

### Donations

If you cannot give us your time, we could certainly use your money! 75% of your first \$150 in donations to the Alberta Greens are returned to you on your next Alberta tax return. You can also receive this tax break on donations to joint projects between the Alberta Greens and other environmental and social action groups. Contact us for more details on how to help your favourite group.

### Comment

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to "The Editor", Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6, by fax to (403) 289-6658 or by email to [crowed@cadvision.com](mailto:crowed@cadvision.com).

### Change of Address

Please let us know your new address when you move. Include your name, old and new addresses and date of the move.

Places policy have led to our current assessment:

1. Lack of Meaningful Protection on the Ground  
...almost two years since the programme's announcement, not one new protected area has been created as a result of the Special Places process...A case in point is the Rocky Mountain sites. The PCC's advice to you to establish local committees for four Rocky Mountain sites was given in August 1996. Six months later, not one of those local committees had begun delib-

erations.

Sites that have been established (e.g., Kakwa and Elbow-Sheep Wildland Provincial Parks, Wind Valley and Prairie Coulee Natural Areas, Ross Lake Ecological Reserve, and others,) have been described by the Government as being the products of Special Places. However, in reality they have occurred independently of the meaningful involvement of the PCC and local committees.

Further, many of these sites, including Wind Valley and Prairie Cou-

lees, are not truly protected. Their designation as Natural Areas and the existence of dispositions allows continued and new industrial development within their boundaries.

## 2. Inadequate Landbase

Early meetings of the PCC saw distribution of a series of scientific reports which set out many of the principles of conservation biology, and a science-based approach to the establishment of protected areas. These reports included some general recommendations about how those principles may be applied to a protected areas network for Alberta. One of those reports was "Alberta Protected Areas System Analysis (1994)"...It was clear on the face of the document that [its] targets [were] intended to be only a tool for analyzing the adequacy of the protected landbase, and were never intended to be a maximum limit for protection. ...

Early in 1996, despite our vigorous objections, the PCC was told that it ought not to consider any further landbase than those targets set out in [this report], regardless of the degradation of the sites under consideration, regardless of the number of dispositions which might result in future degradation, regardless of the degree of protection being considered, and regardless of the particular configuration or ecological features of the sites. In the foothills, for example, one of the largest but most fragmented natural regions of Alberta, your staff is insisting that only 2 percent of the natural region be considered for protection...

## 3. Inadequate Scope of Protection

Recently, Special Places staff and staff in the Minister's office have begun claiming that Special Places is a program to protect landscapes, not wildlife. This is nonsense. Special Places is the Alberta Government's response to its commitment to the goals of World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces cam-

paign. The whole rationale of Endangered Spaces is to protect the spaces (i.e., habitat) required by wildlife species. The Special Places policy documents confirm that it is the representation (by adequate protection) of environmental diversity (i.e., all forms of life) that is the goal of the program. As noted above, landscapes (Level 1 themes) are merely a useful tool for measuring progress toward the goal. It is absurd to declare that the program's goals will be met if landscapes are protected but the wildlife that depends on them is not.

...Even if the prescribed degree of protection could be achieved for areas properly configured, then only 80 percent of the plant and animal species making up Alberta's biodiversity would be adequately protected. CPAWS has consistently advocated that the programme cannot abandon the other 20 percent of Alberta's species. In that most vulnerable 20 percent are large carnivores, wide-ranging migratory species such as caribou, and many endangered species. The special needs of these species include large unfragmented landscapes... To protect landscape without regard to the welfare of these species is folly, yet that is precisely what has become the policy dictated for the Special Places programme.

## 4. Inadequate Scope of Interests

As you know, CPAWS has been vocal in its position that Special Places must be, above all, a programme for the protection of Alberta's wild places and their inhabitants. We only agreed to take part in the process when we received your assurance that preservation was to be the foremost goal of the programme, having priority over the other goals listed in the policy document, "Special Places 2000: Alberta's Natural Heritage". While we have not compromised in that position, we recognize that

there are Albertans with other interests who have sought to have their interests dealt with through the programme. Because of the limit on the landbase available for consideration (as described above) those interests cannot be adequately served.

The needs of recreational users of wild areas, especially those using snowmobiles and off-highway vehicles, often conflict with the needs of preservation. For this reason, both interests cannot be met in the same areas. Recreational users have been led to believe that Special Places will serve their interests, and have participated in good faith in the process in that expectation. In order that that expectation not be betrayed, land must be made available for recreational use, but without detracting from the landbase available for protection. To deny this point, as has been done over the last year by government policy, is to create unnecessary conflict between environmental and recreational interests.

## 5. Existing Dispositions

Throughout our participation in Special Places, the matter of existing dispositions has been a contentious issue. This is precisely because so much of Alberta's landscape is subject to dispositions. If all dispositions are to be strictly honoured, without flexibility, then no significant amount of land can be protected from industrial development. We have thus advocated that the legally enforceable rights of dispositions holders be respected, but that this be done in a creative manner, considering such alternatives as land swaps or compensation. As well, many industrial and other users have called for a clarification of this aspect of the policy in order to avoid undue conflict.

## 6. Lack of Co-ordination

As you know, one of the aspects of the Special places programme which has long been of concern to CPAWS, and others, is the strong

role given to local committees to determine the nature and use of sites to be set aside for protection. We have been concerned that local interests may not fully appreciate sites which in some cases are of national or international interest. We have been concerned that local economic or social pressures may overwhelm the environmental interest.

Nevertheless, we have come to accept that local committees have a valuable contribution to make to the selection and management of protected areas within the Special Places programme. Our increased comfort in the areas has been nurtured by certain aspects of the process recommended by the PCC, which we understood to have received your approval. In particular, we were pleased to see that the PCC would have significant input into the membership and terms of reference of local committees. As well, we were satisfied that any recommendations from local committees would be referred back to the PCC, and that any discrepancies between the perspectives of the two levels of advisory committees would be resolved by an iterative process between them. This led us to have some reassurance that local committees could not depart too far from the protection goal of the programme.

Unfortunately, that prescribed process has been disregarded in practice. You have recently sanctioned the establishment in the Castle area of a local committee which gives every indication of operating in the manner which we had most feared. The terms of reference for that committee do not require it to use consensus for decision-making, nor do they require the local committee to consider the protection of the Castle area as the committee's goal. Indeed, we are dismayed to hear that those who have a history of interest in the protection of the Castle area may be systematically precluded

from membership...

On the other end of the process, we have become increasingly uneasy that the PCC is not being afforded the opportunity to review the nominations submitted by the public before they have been prescreened by others within the government. We view the broad membership of the PCC as conveying upon it the role of conflict resolution. Sites ought not to be removed from its consideration because of the possibility of conflict. To do so is to grant priority to the interests of some sectors prior to any debate. That is precisely what we have been led to believe has happened in some instances.

### **7. Legislative Reform**

The issue of the adequacy of Alberta's protected areas legislation was one of the keys which caused CPAWS to hesitate to enter the Special Places process in 1995. We have since seen that this concern is broadly shared by other sectors, as evidenced by the consensus of the PCC in endorsing the Progress Report of its legislation subcommittee. While you have indicated that action will be forthcoming on this point, we must remind you that until the legislation is reformed true success in protecting any of the areas under consideration in Special Places will be very difficult, if not impossible. Your continued support for this effort is therefore appreciated.

### **Conclusion**

The cumulative effect of the above problems is that Special Places has deteriorated to the point where the goal of protection has been compromised by inaction on critical sites, by vague and expanding commitments to some competing interests, by the disregarding of other competing interests, by elevating the local municipalities to supersede that of the PCC, and by a process which lacks any consistency of approach. Unless significant changes are imposed on these aspects of the programme it can-

not succeed in establishing an adequate and representative protected areas network for the province.

Despite our misgivings, CPAWS will continue to participate in the Special Places programme in the short term. We do so in the hope that we may influence decisions for the better on a site-by-site, and issue-by-issue basis. We wish to make clear, however, that our participation does not imply any acceptance of the viability of the programme as it currently exists. Indeed, we believe just the opposite. The programme is destined to fail unless the above problems are addressed.

Because of the ineffectiveness of the Special Places process, CPAWS will no longer regard the process as our primary vehicle for our advocacy in support of Alberta's wildlands and their inhabitants. We regard the Alberta public as having a key role to play in the design of this policy, and therefore shall increasingly be airing our concerns in the public arena. You may regard our recent advertisement respecting the foothills natural region, a copy of which is enclosed for your reference, as an example of this new approach.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Francis, Sam Gunsch,  
David W. Poulton

Canadian Parks and Wilderness  
Society

