

## The Wonder of Water

*Marcy Caouette*

Following the highly successful International Year of Mountains in 2002, the United Nations (UN) has shifted its focus by designating 2003 as the International Year of Fresh Water. In doing so the UN hopes to promote efforts to protect the world's fresh water, and give more people access to reliable and safe drinking sources.



Canada celebrates the Wonder of Water

According to Environment Canada, of the world's total water supply only 2.5 percent is fresh and two-thirds of that amount exists in the form of ice caps and glaciers. Currently about 40% of the world's population, more than two billion people, face water shortages. Given the present human population growth rate, the UN predicts that by 2025 two-thirds of the world's population, some 5.5 billion people, will not have adequate water.



Not just a pretty cascading stream - a sustainer of life

Over the last several decades Canadians are becoming more aware that our abundant water supply is by no means infinite or exempt from environmental degradation. "Changes in precipitation patterns, dramatic glacial recession, an uneven distribution of water sources and increases in demand are forcing Canadians to re-evaluate the importance of water to our economy and our cultural and ecological heritage"(Wonder of Water). The International Year of Fresh Water aims to raise awareness on water issues and protect this valuable resource for future generations. Beginning this year, using the United Nations International Year of Fresh Water as a platform, the Wonder of Water initiative will be launched across Canada. With a network of

partners that spans the country, this two-year celebration will promote understanding and appreciation of how water has influenced the history and development of our country and recognize our society's physical and cultural connections to fresh water.

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TBA

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The Wonder of Water and The International Year of Fresh Water celebrations are designed to meet several objectives in Canada. These objectives begin with simply creating awareness of the resource. They continue further to encourage and support projects that advance efficient water management and use, water quality improvement, and aquatic ecosystem restoration in Canada.

Alberta Parks and Protected Areas is one of many partners that represent Alberta. There are celebrations being planned in several of our sites around the province. An up to date listing of events and activities being planned across Alberta and Canada can be found at [www.wonderofwater.ca](http://www.wonderofwater.ca). Check out this fast-growing web site for information about the celebrations, the partners involved and how you can get involved.



Here in Canada many of us take our water for granted

**The Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association (SAPAA)** is a non-profit organization that operates independently of the parks and protected areas program. It was formed in 1999 by a group of volunteer stewards to share ideas and expertise, so that they could more effectively carry out their duties as stewards for their natural areas. It gives stewards opportunities to meet once or twice a year to discuss common issues and share experiences. It also provides a means of conveying stewards' general concerns to government. The SAPAA newsletter provides an additional vehicle for communication among stewards and gives updates on recent events and developments.

This year, the SAPAA field trip on May 24th was to Northwest of Bruderheim, a natural area northeast of Edmonton that is monitored by one of the member stewards. A second trip to the Whitehorse Wildland Park (previously Cardinal Divide Natural Area) south of Hinton, may be run in August if there is enough interest.

If stewards are interested in field trips or in finding out more about SAPAA, contact Alison Dinwoodie at (780) 437-7183, or e-mail: [adinwoodie@shaw.ca](mailto:adinwoodie@shaw.ca) (note change of e-mail address).

For more information on the volunteer program or to view past issues of this newsletter, visit: [www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer). You can also access our web site by visiting [www.cd.gov.ab.ca](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca) then click on the "Getting Involved" link.

# BIRDS BIRDS BIRDS!

*Submitted by Glenn Naylor, District Conservation Officer, Kananaskis Country/Bow District*

Bow Valley Provincial Park is well known for good birding. It is a great place to visit in the late spring to see the beautiful mountain bluebirds that return year after year.

Over many years, individuals have erected bird houses throughout the park. These houses were placed by people who at one time lived or worked in the park, or as projects, in consultation with park staff. Unfortunately, no one kept a record of where these houses were put, or if any birds ever used them.

In order to document the location and determine use of bird boxes throughout the park, volunteer stewards will be mapping the location of all the boxes in the park, cleaning and fixing them, and monitoring use through spring and early summer. This is no easy task, first we have to find them! Coordinating these efforts will be volunteers Aaron and Elise Bowersock.



Aaron and Elise checking a newly found birdhouse

However before any legwork could be done, Aaron and Elise sat down with conservation officers and created a map with 5 zones in the park to assist with numbering and monitoring the houses.

This project will involve walking many kilometres, all through the park, looking for these elusive items! Whenever one is found, a GPS reading is taken and stored. The locations will then be plotted on a map, and a number assigned to each.

This alone will take a long time to complete, and it is going to take a few seasons until we feel we have found them all. However it does not end there!

Next comes cleanout of old nesting debris, and determining what needs to be done to fix or replace the boxes. From what has been found so far, it is looking like a large number will need work of some kind. For example, a lot of the houses have enlarged holes from squirrel activity. These holes will have to be fixed and a way found to return the size to the appropriate diameter.

Work days are going to be established for stewards to come and help repair the boxes. We will try to clean up and fix as many houses as we can this spring. Luckily the mild temperatures and lack of snow this past winter have allowed us to get started early.

It won't be long before birds will be returning and looking for nesting locations and we will have to stop this maintenance work. Once nesting season is over, we will resume the locating, repairing and replacing activities again.

Monitoring will begin in a couple of months and the more houses we find, the better.

We would like to hear from anyone interested in helping with locating, repairing, and monitoring these boxes. This is an ongoing project that will continue year after year.

If you are interested in birding, or you are handy with a saw and hammer and can help with this project, we can use your help; whether it be just a day or two at a time, or in an ongoing capacity! It's one heck of a way to get to know the park!

Please contact Susan Cameron at 403-673-3663 or email at [susan.cameron@gov.ab.ca](mailto:susan.cameron@gov.ab.ca)

## Calling All Submissions!

To submit an article, to contact us regarding changes to the mailing list, or to receive a free subscription please contact:

Lori at (780) 427-3805 or e-mail at [Lori.Ruzycki@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Lori.Ruzycki@gov.ab.ca)

or write to:

Partners in Preservation  
Visitor Services Branch  
Parks & Protected Areas Division  
2nd Floor, Oxbridge Place  
9820 - 106 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6

Deadline for submissions for the next issue is September 30, 2003.

**Articles should be no longer than 500 words in length and photos should be at least 300 dpi and sent as JPG's or TIF's.**

For further information on guidelines for article submissions, visit [www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer) and click on "What's New".

# Happy 15th Anniversary to the Volunteer Steward Program

Submitted by Marcy Caouette



## In the Beginning

The Volunteer Steward Program began in September 1987 with only a handful of volunteers. It grew rapidly by word of mouth and by the end of the first year, 20 individuals had signed up to monitor 26 sites available to the program. The program's popularity grew significantly, and in 1988, the Natural Areas Newsletter was created to provide communication between program staff and stewards. The following year marked the signing on of a record number of volunteer stewards throughout Alberta. In total, 56 individuals became new stewards, a record that has been neither duplicated nor surpassed. The steward logo, created to add a visual identity for program participants, remains the same to this day. Since 1987, enrolment in the program has continued to grow and contributions made by volunteer stewards have become increasingly valuable.

## Overwhelming Response

With a desire to bring together all of our stewards, the program's first conference was held at the Strathcona Wilderness Center in April of 1990. This conference was unique in that it was planned, and organized in large part by the stewards themselves. A needs assessment showed a maximum of 50 people were interested in attending the conference. By the registration deadline a total of 110 people had registered, forcing us to turn away further requests. The people at the wilderness center went out of their way to accommodate us. Rooms were filled beyond capacity and the conference was a huge success.

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**... by the end of the first year 20 individuals had signed up to monitor 26 sites ...**

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This was an indication of the support and dedication stewards would demonstrate throughout the many years to come. The response received following the first conference was overwhelmingly positive, and has served as a

model in subsequent conference planning. The conference has continued to evolve and is still a great way to network with other volunteers and staff, while providing opportunities to increase knowledge of stewardship and our heritage resources.

## Name Changes and Steps Forward

Through steward input, the Natural Areas Newsletter underwent a name change to become The Steward. Then in 1993, the Natural Areas Program moved from the Public Lands Division, where it had been since the 1970's, to Parks Services of Alberta Environmental Protection. The diverse range of protected areas coordinated by Parks Services expanded the steward opportunities to include provincial recreation areas, wilderness areas, and provincial parks.

The Volunteer Steward Program also saw Dennis Jonker, steward for Northwest of Bruderheim Natural Area, become the first volunteer steward to obtain special constable status. With this status, Dennis became a bylaw officer within the natural area boundaries, with the ability to enforce the applicable municipal bylaws.



Volunteers from across Alberta enjoying a session at the first Volunteer Steward Conference in 1990

## Special Places Underway

In 1995 the Special Places Program began its mission to complete a network of protected landscapes representing the environmental diversity of the province's six natural regions. Five and a half years later, when Special Places was brought to a close, there were many new protected areas of Alberta's natural landscapes. In all there were 81 newly designated and 13 expanded protected areas, wildland provincial parks, ecological reserves, provincial parks and natural areas. This expansion created new and diverse steward opportunities, across the province.

## Ten Years Young

September 1997, to honor 10 years of dedication to the Protected Areas Volunteer Steward Program, the Honorable Ty Lund, Minister of Environmental Protection, presented the volunteer stewards with a beautiful buffalo print entitled "Sacred and Sacrificed". Doris and Eric Hopkins, volunteer stewards for the Coyote Lake Natural Area, accepted the award on behalf of all 198 individuals and 67 group stewards involved with the program. Each year this print is passed on to a new steward to recognize outstanding contributions.

## 2001- Celebrating Volunteers

The United Nations designated 2001, the International Year of the Volunteer. As worldwide attention was called to the valuable role that volunteers play, we in the Parks and Protected Areas Volunteer Steward Program embraced what we had always known and celebrated. Long before this internationally designated year, the Parks and Protected Areas Volunteer Steward Program have given recognition to the remarkable

contributions made by individual and group volunteers. Over the years specific awards, including the Green Shield, Outstanding Individual Steward, Outstanding Group Steward, and Parks and Protected Areas Achievement Award, have been created and presented to acknowledge outstanding volunteer accomplishments.

## 15 Years and Counting

In 15 years the Volunteer Steward Program has become a major success; a direct result of the continued support and dedication of past and present volunteer stewards. John Kristensen, the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the program has stated, "The Parks and

for over 160 sites around Alberta; contributing approximately 30,000 hours each year, to the parks and protected areas program. Their role is critical and contributions, immeasurable. Stewards have aided the parks and protected areas program in many ways; from monitoring sites to assisting in the creation of site management plans. Through the diligence of our stewards, issues in our protected areas have been brought to our attention and we continue to work together to reach resolutions.

Meeting the commitments of the Volunteer Steward Program requires enthusiasm and determination from all involved; we thank you for your



At the 2003 Volunteer Conference, Fred Moffatt, Parks Executive Director (right) presents the "Sacred and Sacrificed" print to John Woitenko (left) from Riverlot 56 Natural Area Society

Protected Areas Volunteer Steward Program is one of the most effective Volunteer Steward Programs in North America. It has been a model for other stewardship initiatives in Western Canada, including Alberta Conservation Association's 'Buck for Wildlife' steward program." Currently 271 individual, 60 group and 5 roving stewards, are caring

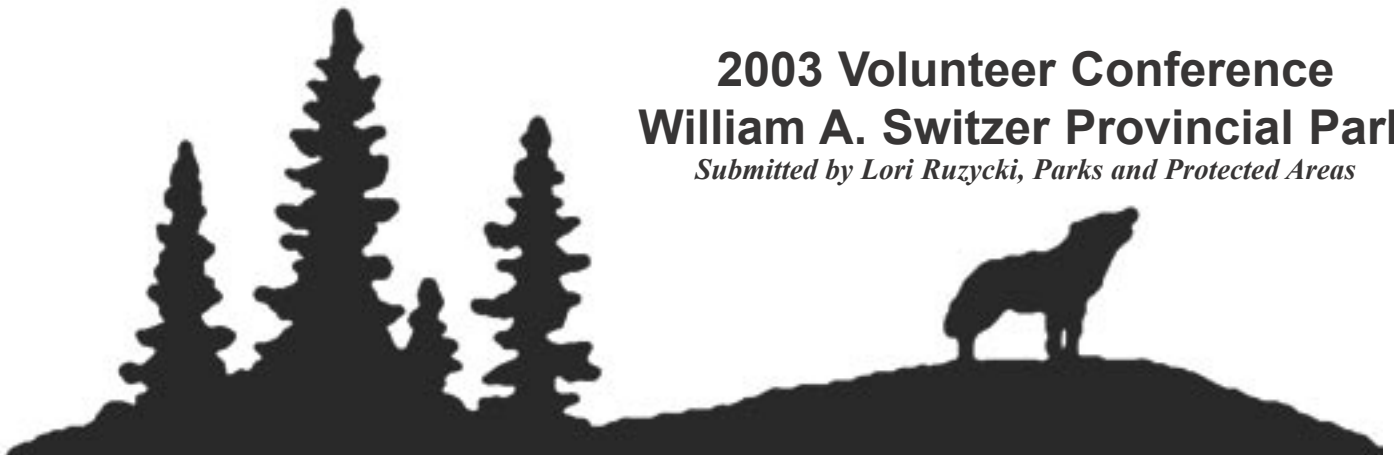
support. This program would not exist without your dedication. We look forward to another successful year, and many more to come.

## Happy Anniversary

From the staff of Parks and Protected Areas Division

# 2003 Volunteer Conference William A. Switzer Provincial Park

*Submitted by Lori Ruzycski, Parks and Protected Areas*



The 2003 Volunteer Conference was held April 25 – 27 at Blue Lake Adventure Lodge in William A. Switzer Provincial Park. The lodge, nestled in the snow-capped Rocky Mountains near Hinton, was an ideal setting. Accommodations and meals were provided all within easy walking distance of conference venues.



Stumped - taking the chill off

Activities kicked off on Friday with a trade show featuring several exhibits, including one from the Friends of Switzer Park, whose fleece shirts and vests became much sought items by the end of the weekend! The main attraction on Friday evening was STUMPED – THE ALL FORESTRY BLUEGRASS BAND, who put on a great show.

**2004 Volunteer Conference  
Bow Valley Provincial Park  
\* Date Change \***

**September 24 - 26, 2004**

Saturday's sessions were informative and provided lots of opportunities for networking among volunteers and Community Development staff. The outdoor sessions gave conference participants a chance to see more of the park – there were park tours, a session on maintenance of trails, and let's not forget those the early morning bird walks (thanks to Michele Macdonald).

The big event was the awards banquet on Saturday evening. The meal, which was very tasty, was catered by Blue Lake Adventure Lodge. After dinner, award presentations were made to ten very deserving recipients, whose support and dedication to the Parks and Protected Areas volunteer program was whole-heartedly acknowledged by their peers. More than 120 attended from across the province.

The evening concluded with guest speaker Lloyd "Kiwi" Gallagher's fascinating presentation about his Mount Everest expedition. His talk made us all very aware of the pleasures and hardships experienced when attempting such a challenging adventure. One thing I do have to say about Lloyd's presentation, and the guest speakers of years past, it really gives you the desire to explore more of our province, Canada and the rest of the world!

The conference ended on Sunday with a couple more sessions, one of which was a synopsis of the Grizzly Bear Research Project currently taking place in the Hinton area. This session was very popular.

On a personal note...during my years working with the Volunteer Coordinating Committee and helping to organize the conference, the eagerness of volunteers to participate rain, snow, or shine makes me very aware of how important our volunteer program is, and how truly committed our volunteers are to Alberta's parks and protected areas network. I look forward to seeing everyone again at next year's conference in Bow Valley Provincial Park.



Lloyd Gallagher's inspiring adventures

## 2003 Volunteer Awards

### Green Shield Award Wagner Natural Area Society

Since its creation in 1982 the **Wagner Natural Area Society** has shown outstanding stewardship, helping to secure an additional 65 hectares of adjacent land and taking on many other important activities. Serving as a model for steward groups throughout Alberta, the Wagner Natural Area Society is a great example of how a community-minded group can play an important role in preserving and presenting our province's natural heritage.



Ivan Strang, MLA for West Yellowhead presents to the Wagner Natural Area Society

### Steward Service Excellence Award

Throughout 20 years of stewardship, **Riverlot 56 Natural Area Society** has played a major role in the establishment and development of the natural area and has continued to actively preserve this unique natural setting within the growing city of St. Albert.

### Outstanding Individual Steward Award

**Gladys Pennock** has lived her entire life within a few miles of Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park and now in her senior years, she enthusiastically shares her knowledge, leading hiking tours and publishing booklets on the wildflowers and hikes in the park.

Last year **Margot Hervieux** was one of the driving forces behind the resurrection of the Kleskun Geology Picnic and the author of a full colour guide that details the geological, natural and human history of the Kleskun Hills Natural Area.

### Outstanding Group Steward Award

Since becoming stewards in 1987, the **J. J. Collett Foundation** has worked to preserve the natural area and instill environmental values in the community by building interpretive trails, facilitating school visits, protecting rare and significant natural features and a wide range of other activities.

### Parks and Protected Areas Achievement Award

**Casey Bizon's** vision, dedication and leadership focused the efforts of his community to develop Poachers Landing Provincial Recreation Area and to establish the La Biche River Wildland Park, both located along the Athabasca River near Plamondon.

### Volunteer Leadership Award

**Glenn Naylor's** investment in developing understanding and support for volunteer involvement has resulted in great long-term benefits for the Volunteer Steward Program in the Bow District of Kananaskis Country.

### Campground Host Hospitality Award

Hosts for the past five summers, **Mike and Jean Kliparchuk** helped to make memories for campers at Cross Lake Provincial Park, with weekly activities like crafts, races, beach volleyball, horseshoe tournaments and sand sculpting.

Truly outstanding volunteers, since 1992 **Roy and Edith Middleton** have hosted in 12 different provincial parks, delivering a variety of presentations and children's programs.

From the first week of May until November, **Scotty and Murri Spence's** efforts to meet and welcome EVERY camper left many with lasting positive impressions and the desire to return to Rochon Sands Provincial Park.

**Note: new deadline for  
award nominations has  
changed to June 15th 2004.**

For more details and photos of these outstanding award recipients, check the volunteer web site at [www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks/volunteer)

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

*Submitted by Ellen Gasser and Val Street, Environmental Education Specialists, Fish Creek Provincial Park*

On June 3, 1982, the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre (FCELC) offered its very first school programs. Since that date, over 370,000 students, 13,000 teachers and 75,000 parent volunteers have participated in environmental education programs offered here.

The Alberta Government established Fish Creek Provincial Park in 1975. The Mannix House, an existing residence built in 1954, was renovated as an environmental learning centre and opened in 1981, offering school programs in June the following year.

Originally known as the Shannon Terrace Environmental Education Centre, the site was renamed the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre four years ago to better reflect its location as part of Fish Creek Provincial Park.

The mission of the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre is to educate people experientially about natural environments and the value and importance of parks and protected areas. This is done through

- developing and delivering environmental education programs;
- providing professional development opportunities to educators; and
- providing program presentations to the public.

Approximately 25,000 students, teachers, parent volunteers and members of the public participate annually in programs offered at the Environmental Learning Centre, the Bow Valley Ranch Visitor Centre and throughout the park.

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**... over 370,000 students, 13,000 teachers and 75,000 parent volunteers have participated ...**

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Today, the Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre is considered a leader in developing and providing exceptional environmental education initiatives.

### **Volunteer Involvement**

While the Environmental Learning Centre does not have an established corps of volunteers, over the years many people have contributed in many ways to the program.

Each year 2 to 6 students from university education degree programs assist learning centre staff in programming over their 6 week stay.

The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society provides assistance for special events, assistance in raising funds and in monitoring and habitat protection work around the centre.

For the past four years a professional development program at the centre, called "Taking It Outside", has offered 30 to 40 environmental education workshops to teachers. Teachers who participate in sessions learn from a team that includes environmental specialists and educators who have experience using this information in their classrooms. The volunteer instructors recognize the value of teaching the teachers, knowing their messages about the environment will then be passed on to hundreds of students.

This past winter, a series of slide shows on parks and protected areas was launched. Many of the presenters volunteered their time to deliver these important messages about Alberta's special places.



Fish Creek Environmental Learning Centre

Other volunteers contribute photographs or other supplies needed for programs, review program materials and provide ideas for program content. Their support is valuable to the centre's continued operation.





## FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK CELEBRATION EVENTS

To celebrate the tremendous achievements of the Environmental Learning Centre over the past 20 years, the education staff hosted two major events during Environment Week in June:

### Public Open House

Sunday, June 1, 2003

Games, activities and displays showcased our award-winning school programs. Participants were able to choose from a wide range of activities about plants, animals and ecosystems and then sit and relax as an interpretive team from Kananaskis entertained with a short performance. Birthday cake and refreshments wrapped up the day.

### 20th Anniversary Celebration

Friday, June 6, 2003

Three classes of students completed a series of program activities for an audience of media, dignitaries and other invited guests and then helped us celebrate with speeches and refreshments.

Throughout the school year, on the third of each month, students visiting the centre received a commemorative button and teachers received a 20th anniversary t-shirt. In addition, there were seven teachers that we just had to recognize. Over the years each of these teachers brought more than 20 classes to visit us. In appreciation for this support we provided each teacher with a free program.

If you would like more information about the learning centre or its programs, please contact Ellen Gasser at 297-7927. Thank you!

# Test Your Water Knowledge

1. How much of Canada's fresh water is located in Alberta? <sup>1</sup>  
a) 40%    b) 2.2%    c) 30%    d) 10%
2. Which activity in Alberta is responsible for the highest annual water consumption? <sup>1</sup>  
a) recreation  
b) commercial industry  
c) irrigation  
d) water management (lake levels)
3. How much of Alberta's electricity is produced from water powered developments? <sup>1</sup>  
a) 16%    b) 0%    c) 30%    d) 5%
4. Is it safe for hikers and backpackers to drink water from streams or lakes in remote areas of Alberta, without purification? <sup>1</sup>  
YES or NO
5. How much of the world's wetlands have been lost, to date? <sup>2</sup>  
a) 75%    b) 50%    c) 30%    d) 10%
6. How many children in the world die each day from preventable water related diseases? <sup>2</sup>  
a) 600 000    b) 600    c) 6 000    d) 60
7. How many liters of water are lost each day by a faucet dripping one drop per second? <sup>1</sup>  
a) 1L    b) 5L    c) 15L    d) 25L
8. During irrigation what percent of water is lost due to evaporation or run-off? <sup>2</sup>  
a) 5%    b) 30%    c) 60%    d) 80%
9. What is the global water industry worth?  
a) 200 million    c) 20 million  
b) 600 billion    d) 400 billion
10. The underground aquifer that supplies one-third of the water for the continental US is being depleted   ? faster than it is being replenished. <sup>4</sup>  
a) 8 times    b) 12 times    c) 17 times    d) 20 times

<sup>1</sup> Environment Alberta.(2002) Water for Life: Facts and information on water in Alberta.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations International Year of Fresh Water. (n.d) Retrieved. April 3, 2003 from: <http://www.un.org/events/water/factsheet.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Tully, Shawn, "Water, Water Everywhere," Fortune Magazine, May 15, 2000. Page 55.

<sup>4</sup> Sources: Barlow, Maude, "Blue Gold". Yaron, Gil, "The Final Frontier". Public Services International: <http://www.world-psi.org>, Fortune magazine, World Water Vision

*see page 10 for answers*

## BOW VALLEY VOLUNTEER STEWARDS IN GOOD HANDS!

*Submitted by Glenn Naylor, District Conservation Officer, Kananaskis Country/Bow District*

When I assumed the role of coordinating the Volunteer Steward Program for Wind Valley and surrounding natural areas in 1997, everything was new to me. It didn't take long for me to realize that it was a lot of work and time investment. Finding the time to effectively coordinate, and ensure things were being done correctly was difficult.

At the time, this volunteer steward group was one of the largest single groups in one location in the province. Add to this the fact I had never been involved in the volunteer steward program; I faced a huge learning curve!

We managed to get through. However, very high on the wish list was a person to coordinate the program for the Bow Valley for 6 months of the year. We needed someone who could spend the time it needed and deserved.

We had discussions about how we could possibly hire someone for three days a week or even full time to work on this and other volunteer initiatives.

In the 2002 departmental reorganization, Susan Cameron, the administrative support person at Bow Valley Provincial Park, was assigned to my program area. It didn't sink in at first, but here was the opportunity that I had been praying for!

After discussing my ideas with Susan, I found she was definitely interested in the program and excited about this change from what she had been doing. It didn't take her long to get right into the thick of things, and suddenly things were happening!



Susan Cameron - ready for action!

We made the volunteer steward program one of her priorities, and after the amalgamation of steward groups into the Bow Valley Protected Areas Steward Group, she became and still is now the main contact for all the Bow Valley stewards. Sandra Myers, the provincial Volunteer Steward Coordinator, works closely with Susan to ensure that the provincial steward program procedures are maintained.

Susan has been the activator for the Bow Valley Volunteer Stewards for over a year now. She prepares the local steward newsletters, liaises with Sandra for mail-outs, coordinates inspection reports, keeps steward lists up-to-date, ensures that conservation officers check out the stewards' reports, gets back to stewards with what has happened to their inspection report comments, coordinates field trips, signs out equipment, and much more. And me, well I am just darn lucky I have someone like Susan to work with. I am still involved deeply with the program, coordinate it with Susan and love meeting and working with all the stewards, but it's Susan who deserves all the thanks.

The Bow Valley Volunteer Steward program has never run so well. Without Susan's enthusiasm, hard work and big smile, it would not be where it is now.

Susan will be attending the volunteer workshops and conferences. If you are ever passing by or visiting Bow Valley Provincial Park, (we are right on the Trans Canada Highway!) make sure you stop by in the main park office and say hello. She always has the coffee on and a bowl of goodies on her desk.

Thanks Susan! Your efforts and dedication are appreciated by all!

**Test Your Water Knowledge  
Answers from page 9.**

1)b 2)c 3)d 4)NO 5)b 6)c 7)d 8)c 9)d 10)a

# Volunteering at Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park

*Submitted by Gladys Pennock, volunteer steward*

## My Life In The Park

I was born on a farm on the Red Deer River banks north of dry island, year of birth 1925, July 8th. My father's name was John Morse; he homesteaded some land there. My father's two brothers homesteaded the land north of the Buffalo Jump Campsite. My brother George still farms the land my father homesteaded. So the area has been in the family for many years.

I was born into a large family, me being the middle one. My brothers and sisters and I spent much of our childhood on the island and the canyons and riverbanks surrounding the island, which of course was our playground.

When I got married, I moved a few miles west and later to Elnora, Alberta, where I now live about 12 miles from the riverbanks north of the dry island. So I have lived in the area all of my life.

When my children were old enough I would take them hiking. Some of my sisters also hike with me. I didn't keep a record of my hikes in those days, but I have done, since 1996 and have introduced a lot of people to the area.

## Showing Off The Park

I begin my hikes as soon as it is dry enough in the spring - usually April, and continued until it is too frozen or there is too much snow in the fall, usually around mid-November.

Most of my hikes begin on the canyon banks, south of my brother's house, straight north of the dry island, near the farm that I grew up on. There is no road there, so we walk on trails from the edge of the bank, mostly animal trails.

Some of the big groups I take like to drive to the Buffalo Jump Campsite. So when I lead the hike I start by going east to the dry island and then take them on my regular hike. From that direction, the hike is further and it takes longer.

As this is an out-of-the-way place, many of the people that come hiking with me have no idea that such a place exists, or how to get there. Also most are very impressed with the scenery that has much more to offer than at the Buffalo Jump Campsite. There is such a variety of scenery, spruce tree valleys, badlands, hoodoos, immense canyons, and of course the "dry island". Also I must not forget "The Devils Gate" which is northeast of the island. The Devils Gate consists of some very large impressive hoodoos. At one time some rails were there, to stop livestock from passing into more of the badlands.

I have many trails that I go on, but when I take new people I like to take them on this special hike. It is mostly in open areas, so that people can see the scenery for miles around. There are still lots of cliffs but not so many trees to block the view.

From 1996 to the end of 2002 I guided about 1,334 people on about 211 hikes. Most hikes take 4 to 5

hours. In 2002 I took only 31 hikes with a total of 267 people, as the cold spring and fall made a later start and earlier finish to the season.

Needless to say, it gives me much pleasure to introduce the area to other people, as I love it with a passion. Many of the people say that my interest is very evident when I explain things to them.

Each time I hike, I check to see if anything is out of place such as - vandalism, or bad conduct of any kind in the park. If so I report to Gary Martin, my field contact.

One of my nephews encouraged me to write the booklet "Hiking Trails of The Dry Island" (In Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park), as he said "after you are gone people want to know about the area". I have many trails marked out in the book.

One of my granddaughters encouraged me to do the flower book "Wild Flowers of the Dry Island Area". I took the pictures and wrote the text myself, but could only include some of the flowers. I have not yet printed it in large quantities.

I hope to be able to lead people hiking for a few years yet, to share the beauty of the area with others.



"Many people have no idea that such a place exists"

# 2003 Volunteer Conference Photo Highlights



Unregistered participant seen lurking around Wildhay Hall



Stumped - The All Forestry Bluegrass Band



Trail maintenance hands-on session takes cover for a photo op



Despite the weather, you can depend on the conference to put a smile on your face



Saturday night awards dinner in the Wildhay Hall



Which way did that bird go?

