

Parks for Tomorrow 2008

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Civil Society and Protected Areas (post-conference final)

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“How can a Minister stand up against the pressures of commercial interests who want to use the parks for mining, forestry, for every kind of honky-tonk recreational device known to man, unless the people who love these parks are prepared to band together and support the minister by getting the facts out across the country?” *Honourable Alvin Hamilton, 1960 Hansard*

Introduction

Protected areas, especially national parks, are a highly valued component of Canadian life. They are of critical importance to the survival of many species of wildlife and to the provision of ecosystem services, including fresh-water production and carbon sequestration. Civil society is the owner of those protected areas. Contrary to recent conventional academic wisdom, the origin and development of Canada’s parks and protected areas lies not in business interests or the doctrine of commercial usefulness but rather in the interests of civil society. Indeed it is the special innovation of protected areas in North America (and Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) starting in the 19th century that they are dedicated to the public.

Civil society’s engagement or lack of it has been and will likely continue to *the* determining factor in the success of protected areas in Canada. History has shown that when civil society practices absentee ownership, the result is the destruction or disappearance of protected areas and that when civil society leaves new protected area establishment exclusively to government, little gets done. However, the periods of public engagement in Canada’s protected areas have led to the creation of some of the world’s most emblematic national parks and several world-class protected areas systems. Yet there is much more that needs to be done to respond to the grave environmental conditions we have created for ourselves in the 21st century. We should be protecting at least half of Canada’s lands and waters in order to do our share to keep intact the earth and the natural systems we all depend on.

Principles for civil society and protected areas

This paper will elaborate the following four principles which can serve as a guide for considering the role of civil society in protected areas:

1. Civil society is the owner and primary beneficiary of parks and most protected areas, not just a stakeholder (and always has been).
2. When civil society is engaged, parks and protected areas thrive and new ones are created.

3. When civil society is disengaged bad things happen to parks and protected areas.
4. To face 21st century challenges, civil society should promote an expanded public agenda based on a major role for parks and protected areas that results in protection from industrial exploitation of at least half of Canada's public lands and waters.

Civil society defined

Civil society is a way of referring to the public which acts as individual citizens or through non- government organizations for public-spirited reasons and is distinct from other social groupings such as government, business or family (it does not include aboriginal groups who are a form of government).

Civil society is the owner of protected areas

A critically important but often overlooked point about Canada's parks and protected areas is that they are owned by and dedicated to civil society. Civil society is not a stakeholder, a claimant under a government program or a competing interest group. Civil society is *the* primary beneficiary of protected areas and thus the most important group. Indeed, from the beginning our protected areas have been dedicated to the public through the passage of public statutes.

The Parks Canada Agency was started in 1911 by public servant J. B. Harkin as a Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Harkin felt that one of his first duties was to determine what parks were about. In notes that were later assembled by his long-time secretary Mabel Williams into *The History and Meaning of the National Parks of Canada* he recounts that he looked to the world's first national park, Yellowstone (established in 1872 by act of the US Congress) as the guiding inspiration for both the national park idea and management objectives. He noted the key role civil society played in Yellowstone's creation through "a continent-wide campaign" which "breathe(d) the true sprit of democracy". To Harkin, the effect of creating this first national park was significant for it represented "a new Declaration of Rights- the right of the people to share in the use and enjoyment of the noblest regions in their own land, another great expression of the principle of Conservation- the duty of nation to guard its treasures of art, natural beauty, or natural wonders for generations to come."

In 1930 Harkin and others were able to get this declaration of rights and principle of conservation enshrined in Canada's *National Parks Act*. It states that "The national parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This dedication clause is similarly worded to the key clause in the US *National Park Organic Act* passed in 1916.

Canada now has the oldest and one of the better run national park agencies in the world. It is governed by the *Parks Canada Agency Act* which provides that it is in the “national interest” to protect national parks and national marine conservation areas “in view of their special role in the lives of Canadians and the fabric of the nation”. The *Agency Act* also contains a provision that enshrines a degree of Ministerial accountability to civil society for the management of our parks through the requirement to convene a bi-annual round table gathering of knowledgeable persons.

Much of Canada’s public land is under control of the provinces some of which have created parks for the public benefit using legislative language that incorporates the spirit of the national park dedication clause. For example Ontario’s *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* states “Ontario’s provincial parks and conservation reserves are dedicated to the people of Ontario and visitors for their inspiration, education, health, recreational enjoyment and other benefits with the intention that these areas shall be managed to maintain their ecological integrity and to leave them unimpaired for future generations.” Alberta’s *Willmore Wilderness Park Act* says “The Park is dedicated to the use of the people of Alberta for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and shall, by the management, conservation and protection of its natural resources and by the preservation of its natural beauty, be maintained for the enjoyment of future generations.”

A new form of protected area has emerged in the last 40 years. Land trusts, which are civil society actors created by private individuals and supported by special treatment under the tax system, are now buying land for conservation reasons. These land trusts often seek public funds for their activities, sometimes by justifying their activities as a necessary adjunct to buffer or link protected areas. Examples are the Nature Conservancy of Canada’s Waterton Front Project and Prime Minister Harper’s 2007 announcement of \$250 million in funding to land trusts for connectivity between protected areas (Harper).

Some of the most exceptional protected areas in our country have been designated as World Heritage Sites under the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* which is: “a convention establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods”. As a signatory, Canada “recognizes...the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage”.

Protected areas are a public good often explicitly dedicated by law to the current citizenry and to future citizens yet unborn. Governments hold them in trust for civil society.

The “doctrine of usefulness” and its variants on the commercial origin of our national parks

Most Canadians believe that parks are created to protect wilderness and wildlife and to allow our enjoyment of protected nature. But historians and other park experts have often gone to pains to say that is not their origin (Hart). Frequently they refer to the Canadian

Pacific Railway's desire to build their tourism business and to the "doctrine of usefulness" propounded by Robert Craig Brown at the first version of this conference in 1968. The doctrine of usefulness has been accepted uncritically to the detriment of a full understanding of park history (MacEachern)

The commercial doctrine of usefulness argument is usually buttressed with two quotes. Sir John A MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, said that Banff is 'a spot ...which promises ...not only large pecuniary advantage to the Dominion, but much prestige...It has all the qualifications to make it a place of great resort...this section of the country should be brought at once into usefulness, that people should be encouraged to come there, that hotels should be built.'" (Hansard Commons Debates,1887). The second quote often referred to is by William Cornelius Van Horne, the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who said around the same time: "If we can't export the scenery, we'll import the tourists."

Similarly, perhaps due to a fit of nationalism, it is also sometimes asserted that the US experience of Yellowstone has nothing to do with our history park history which begins with a 10 square mile reserve around the Cave and Basin Hot Springs at Banff in 1885. The argument goes that the unsightly development of thermal pools at Hot Springs, Arkansas was the inspiration for Banff National Park because there was a desire to show we could do a better job. Brown wrote: "The park was clearly intended to be a showpiece for Canada, deliberately modeled to be superior in planning and execution to the Hot Springs in Arkansas."

These views have been woven into the idea that in their origins our parks were "islands of development in a sea of wilderness" that were set up at the urgings of railways and designed to make profits for the private interests in the tourist industry. This perspective is repeated in the fixed interpretive exhibits and film *Steam, Schemes and National Dreams* found in Parks Canada's Cave and Basin Centennial Centre in Banff National Park (which has been in place for about 15 years) and Brown's thesis has been embraced, directly or indirectly, by many writers who are authorities on our parks (Foster, Hart, Killan, MacNamee, Marty).

It is time to adjust this view. These received truths are unfortunate and largely inaccurate views of Canadian park history. They serve to downplay the primacy of civil society interests in our parks and protected areas and they have been used to legitimate the demands of commercial interests at the expense of the public by suggesting that commercial interests have some antecedent claim to the parks. The nationalistic narrative also completely misses the fact that Canada was a participant in a late nineteenth century effort across the English-speaking world to protect wild nature and wildlife in parks.

Canada's Park System either begins in 1887 with Rocky Mountains National Park or with both Orders in Council for parks in 1885, not just the Cave and Basin Hot Springs Order in Council of November, 1885

It is my contention that Canada's national parks system either begins with the Rocky Mountains Park Act of 1887 or the Order in Council reserving four areas for parks in 1885 plus the Order in Council relating to the Cave and Basin Hot Springs on November 12, 1885. The exclusive focus in our park histories on the Banff hot springs has confused the record. That reserve was only protected by an Order in Council for a period of two years and there were other areas reserved by the same method *earlier* that same year.

The Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for 1886 states under the heading Park Reservations in the Rocky Mountains:

“In addition to the reservations at Banff already alluded to, four mountain parks were reserved by Order in Council of the 10th of October last:-

1. A park at Mount Stephen including the country surrounding the base of the mountain and adjacent picturesque points.
2. A reservation in the vicinity of Mount Sir Donald, taking in the loop of the railway and adjacent territory.
3. A sufficient area in the Eagle Pass to include Griffin and Three Valley Lakes, and adjoining points of interest.
4. The amphitheatre at the summit of the Selkirk Mountains.

These four areas did not have hot springs. And the 1886 Interior Report mentions in the context of the Banff hot springs reservation that in addition to receiving information about Arkansas Hot Springs “this Department was furnished with...publications respecting the Yellowstone National Park, all of which have been found valuable and useful.”

If an Order in Council is sufficient to start our national park system it was the first Order in Council of October 10th 1885 that did it. And it is clear that these reservations were not set up to spend money so as to bring them into “usefulness”. In response to criticism about public investment in infrastructure in the Banff area during the Rocky Mountains Park Act debate, Minister of the Interior Thomas White said (Hansard, 1887):

“That is not the only park that we have ventured by Order in Council to reserve. We have reserved others, but have made no expenditure on them, for the simple reason that they required no expenditure to bring them into use... We had no less than four forest reservations throughout the mountains, and my impression is that they will prove advantageous not simply as large groves of fine forest trees in parks of which we all ought to be proud, but they will be of advantage to the country in regards to its salubrity...”

The real discussion about the purpose of our first national park begins with the establishment of Rocky Mountains National Park in 1887. A review of Hansard that records the debate relating to that park shows several references by several speakers to Yellowstone and few references by few speakers to Hot Springs, Arkansas. The latter references are usually confined to the narrow context of spending decisions. The inspiration of Yellowstone is demonstrated in two telling quotes:

Mr. Trow: “The Minister of the Interior has just stated that he thinks I was the individual who first drew the attention of the Government to the advisability of reserving a portion of the territory near Banff for a public park... I was not aware that I had much influence with Minister but I stated the true facts of the case, and that it would be advisable to make of this place a park similar to the Yellowstone Park in Montana.”

Mr. Allan (in Committee) “We have the advantage of the example of our neighbours in the National Park they have laid out in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in the United States.” (Hansard, 1887)

The text of *Rocky Mountains Park Act, 1887* itself confirms the proposition that it was Yellowstone that was the inspiration and civil society the beneficiary of our first national park. It provides at section 2 that the area be “reserved and set apart as a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada” and was modeled on similar language on the Yellowstone Park Act. As Fergus Lothian wrote in the *History of the National Parks of Canada* “Departmental officers had as a prototype Yellowstone National Park...and there is every reason to believe that {this clause’s} framers had recourse to the United States legislation.” Even the name of the park chose to emphasize the Rocky Mountains, not the hot springs, and the first park included Lake Minnewanka and the mountains around it, not just the hot springs and Banff townsite. The 1887 act also made explicit provision for the protection of the park’s wildlife which is not consistent with the park being all about a hot spring spa.

It is also clear from the Hansard record of the 1887 debates that the public, not commercial interests, was to be the beneficiary of this new park inspired by Yellowstone. Here are three illustrative quotes:

Mr. Hawthorn (in Committee, second reading): “I think this is an occasion on which we may offer our congratulations to the people of the Dominion upon the probability of their possessing quite a unique park...In this country we do not possess the material advantages that they have in older countries.. We have no antiquities here expect for our “mountains hoar” and our “ancient trees” and these things, left as nature has left them for us, are in their way, perhaps as great attractions as the ruins of Europe.”

Mr. Kaulbach (in Committee, second reading):” I am glad to have the opportunity of thanking the government for reserving this piece of property for the public and for preventing it getting into the hands of speculators.”, and

Mr. Casey: "I think everyone is agreed as to the advisability of reserving some portion of our vast domain near the Rocky Mountains for the purposes of a public pleasure ground"

The Canadian Pacific Railway certainly benefited but the purpose of the park was public benefit, nature conservation and national identity. Sir John A. Macdonald explicitly rejected privatizing the area by selling it to the CPR "who would only be too glad to take the land and make 1000 percent out of it." (Hansard). The same day (May 3, 1887) Sir Donald Smith, who was deeply involved in the Canadian Pacific Railway, said: "Anyone who has gone to Banff, and from the plateau on which the hotel is to be built, has looked down on the fall immediately below... who has looked on the reaches of the Bow River, and, on turning round beheld the mountains towering heavenward, and not felt himself elevated and proud that all this is part of the Dominion cannot be a true Canadian."

This not to deny that Rocky Mountains Park did include hot springs that were to be developed and did include a townsite that was to be developed and that these were seen as very important actions in that park. But any doubt regarding the conservation and public spirited motivations for our early national park *system* is immediately set to rest by examining the other park creation efforts that were concurrent with and that immediately followed the creation of Rocky Mountains National Park. Brown and others who advance the hot springs centred view of our park history simply ignore these.

Most of our earliest parks were created or expanded at the urging of civil society

Though the reserve around the hot springs at Banff started our very small in 1885 at 10 sq mi, by the time of the debates in 1887 the Rocky Mountains National Park included not only the hot springs and the Banff townsite area but also the mountains nearby and Lake Minnewanka for an area of 260 sq mi. In the late 1890s citizen advocates and administrators called for a further massive expansion of Rocky Mountains National Park. They compared Yellowstone park's 3000 square miles to Rocky Mountain's relatively small 260 square mile area. In 1902, supported by editorials in Vancouver and Winnipeg newspapers, the federal government enlarged the park to 4,400 square miles which included Lake Louise and area and the wilderness watersheds of the Upper Bow, Kananaskis, Red Deer and Spray Rivers (Lothian).

Nor were Canada's other early parks intended to be "islands of civilization in a sea of wilderness" as has been asserted. They were areas dedicated to nature appreciation in the public interest. Yoho (Mount Stephen reservation) and Glacier (Mount Sir Donald and the Amphitheatre at the summit of the Selkirk Mountains reservations) started small. Small reserves were also set up at Lake Louise in 1892 and Waterton in 1894. Eventually they all had hotels associated with railways. Though small sizes with some tourism development might tend to support the "islands of civilization" theory the fact is that these first parks did not stay small for very long. Civil society almost immediately insisted on their expansion to protect more of the mountains.

Glacier National Park was enlarged to 576 sq miles in 1903 as “the Minister acceded to public demand that a larger area of outstanding scenery be set aside for public use” (Lothian). Similarly, Yoho National Park was expanded from 10 sq miles around a railway hotel to 828 sq miles in 1901 (it is now 507 sq miles).

Waterton Lakes National Park started out as the Kootenay Lakes Forest Park in 1895 and was created as a result of the civic activism of rancher L. W. Goodsal, John George “Kootenai” Brown and other southern Albertans. There was no railway hotel involved until the 1920s. Initially only 10 sq mi in size they kept campaigning for a more meaningful size and the park was greatly enlarged. Today it is 204 sq miles (Lothian). But the park is still incomplete because it lacks a large wilderness area. Unlike its adjoining US neighbour, Glacier National Park, it protects none of the magnificent and wildlife rich wilderness of the Flathead Valley. Today this deficiency is the subject of an ongoing civil society conservation campaign to expand the park called Flathead Wild (Flathead.ca).

When Jasper Park was established in 1908 the boundary left out key areas. The Alpine Club of Canada, a civil society organization, lobbied to have the park include important wilderness areas like the Columbia Icefield and Maligne Lake such that by 1914 it became 4,400 square miles in size (Lothian). Jasper is 4200 sq miles today. Similarly, at the urging of the citizens of nearby Revelstoke, Mount Revelstoke National Park was created in 1915.

There were some anomalies other than the Banff hot springs that have been used to justify the doctrine of usefulness and its variations. There were coal mines at Bankhead in Rocky Mountains and Pochahontas in Jasper and a lead zinc mine at Cathedral Mountain in Yoho, and a few grand-fathered logging operations. But these anomalies do not change the fact that these parks were set up with public support for the public interest and they quickly grew to protect vast areas that remain to this day in a wilderness condition.

In addition to federal parks, important provincial parks were created in BC around the same period for nature appreciation reasons: Strathcona, Mount Robson, Mount Assiniboine and Mount Garibaldi. These parks continue to protect outstanding wilderness areas. The enormous Humber Provincial Park was created on the BC side of Banff and Jasper creating a protected connection from them to Glacier National Park in the Selkirk Mountains but it suffered a different fate.

Brown was wrong when he said “the original parks policy of Canada was not a departure from but a continuation of the general resource policy that grew out of the expansionist, exploitive economic programs of the national policy of the Macdonald Government” His “doctrine of usefulness” more aptly applies to early “national” parks established in the 1890s by Ontario, Algonquin National Park (Killan) and Quebec, Tremblant and Laurentides National Parks (Hebert). They were established to protect wildlife, support recreation and promote wise-use of the forest resources there (Tremblant also had a tuberculosis sanatorium purpose). These were more like National Forests in the US set up at the turn of the 20th century where “wise use” of the forests was the original vision

(Runte), rather than federal national parks in Canada or the US that were set up in the same period.

Though there arguably was a national policy to develop the Canadian west as a whole grounded on a doctrine of usefulness, from the beginning there was also a separate and distinct national desire to protect the Rocky Mountains for the public in federal national parks just as the Americans had done at Yellowstone.

Wildlife conservation in the public interest

From the beginning, a provision was made for wildlife conservation in Rocky Mountains Park Act. Shortly after Canada's first parks were created there was heightened public and government alarm at the disappearance of large mammals from North America. Canadian writers of international renown like Ernest Thompson Seton raised awareness and argued for their protection. In the first quarter of the 20th century Canada created Buffalo National Parks, Antelope National Park, Wood Buffalo National Park and the giant Thelon Game Sanctuary to protect animals and their habitats. This was about nature conservation supported by public concern for wildlife (Hewitt, Lothian).

Canada's first parks were part of a broader international context

The early Canadian federal park creation activities were part of a broader cultural trend in the English speaking world. All over the British Empire and in the US new parks were being created for the same reasons. South Africa established Kruger National Park in 1895 and Umfolozi Game Reserve and several other game reserves in 1897. Australia and New Zealand created national parks in the same period (Australia's Royal National Park predates Banff). The State of New York created the Adirondack Park to keep the land owned by the state "forever wild" and enshrined wilderness protection in the state constitution. The US government protected Mount Rainer, Olympic, Grand Canyon and Glacier National Parks. Game reserves were created in India in the 1920s (Stebbing). Canada was at the vanguard of this international movement to protect nature in the interests of civil society with its great western mountain parks.

The two ongoing roles of civil society

There are always two fundamental issues with protected areas: whether they will be created and how they are managed after establishment. This can be analogized to automobile purchases, which involve buying the shiny new car and the vital "after-sales service" that will determine its performance. Civil society's engagement is the major determinant of outcomes relating to both issues.

"After-sales service" to ensure the integrity of parks

After sales service to safeguard parks is the most overlooked role for civil society yet anyone deeply involved knows it is essential. J. B. Harkin wrote that "The battle for the establishment of national parks is long since over but the battle to keep them inviolate is

never won. Claims for the violation of their sanctity are always being put forward under the plausible plea of national or local needs” (Harkin). US President Jimmy Carter, who during his term that ended in 1980 doubled the size of their parks system, wrote “today and everyday we must defend the parks against those who would despoil them” (Heacock).

The Alpine Club of Canada was the first civil society organization to concentrate on the creation and management of parks and made an enormous contribution to their well-being in the first half of the 20th century. Co-founder Elizabeth Parker wrote in 1907 that “the Alpine Club is a national trust for the defense of our mountain solitudes...for the keeping free from the grind of commerce, the wooded passes and valleys and alplands of the wilderness. It is the people’s right to have access to the remote places of safest retreat from the fever and the fret of the market place and the beaten tracks of life” (Reichwein).

When control over natural resources was transferred from the federal government to Alberta in 1930 there was pressure to transfer all the land including the national parks to the province for economic development. The Alpine Club of Canada, working in concert with Parks Commissioner J. B. Harkin, mobilized to fight this. They created the Canada National Parks Association whose leadership included legendary surveyor and longtime ACC President A. O. Wheeler and Selby Walker of Calgary.

Evidence of their efforts can be seen in the record of Hansard, 1930 during the debate regarding deletion of significant areas from Rocky Mountains National Park in the area of Spray Lakes/Kananaskis and north and east of Lake Minnewanka and also a portion of Jasper National Park. These lands were argued to be “more suitable for industrial and commercial purposes than for national park purposes”. Senator Foster noted there were objections: “There is a very lively and commendable interest on the part of the people of Canada in this matter of public parks. I have received twenty or thirty communications within the last fortnight...calling attention to a rather general fear that the parks may be reduced in area for commercial purposes...” The objections failed to prevent the deletion of some lands but they appear to have had an impact. In the Senate Mr. Graham noted for the government that things could have been much worse: “A considerable area is being taken from the parks, but it must be remembered, -and again I am not telling tales out of school- that the provinces were eager to have the entire park area... That was discussed time and again but the Dominion Government would not agree to go so far.”

Unfortunately little remains of the CNPA’s history and they have been largely forgotten though there are some efforts to gather newsletters and do other research (P. Reichwein, 2008 pers. comm.). The author once tried to locate the papers of this organization. He met with Mary Lynas (nee Selby) who was the organization’s secretary and daughter of key member Selby Walker. He was told that “Mum hated the amount of time Dad spent on the CNPA so after Dad died she burned all the papers”. The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary in Calgary is, however, a lasting record of Selby Walker’s commitment to conservation. It was the family homestead which he gave to the City of Calgary.

The dark period: WWII to 1960 when Civil Society went to sleep

The overwhelming magnitude of the Great Depression and World War II changed everything. These seismic events threatened the survival of individuals and society. Respect for and deference to government became the norm. Massive social mobilization in the war effort required authoritarian systems and yielded successful results. Scientific advances led to vast use of agricultural chemicals to increase soil productivity and crop yields. Post-war soldier resettlement together with infrastructure programs made society believe that big institutions were looking out for them. The Cold War with the Soviet Union made people think another war could happen at any time.

Even in the US (which has been the world's hotbed of civil society action), the Organization Man became dominant. President Eisenhower, who had been supreme commander of the Allied forces in WWII, was elected for two terms. He initiated the Interstate Highway system to enable rapid military mobilization. He also initiated Mission 66, a massive road building and tourism facility development initiative in US national parks. In Canada we embraced "scientific forestry" and perpetual sustained yield and trusted government and industry to deliver good management of our forests (Wilson). Rivers were flooded across the country for hydro- power. We built the TransCanada Highway.

The Canadian National Parks Association was a casualty of the War. And after the War was over, the Alpine Club of Canada shifted away from being a conservation organization to one that promoted road building and greater tourism facilities. Reichwein described it this way: "the internal pendulum of the organization had swung from preservation to utilization as a new generation of Alpine Club men and women moved to the fore in the era of post-war expansion" (Reichwein, 1998). No effective voice took their place to speak up for the parks.

Absentee ownership results in vandalism in the 1950s and early 1960s

In the early years of parks and protected areas in Canada, the active presence of civil society in public discourse relating to protected areas resulted in both great leaps forward for our protected areas systems and a largely successful defense of existing parks. In the 1950s the absence of an engaged civil society led to their degradation and neglect. This took two forms.

The first was a frontal assault. Whole protected areas were eliminated or greatly reduced in size. There are two dramatic examples. Hamber Provincial Park BC whose boundaries extended from Jasper on the east to Glacier National Park in the west was reduced to a tiny fragment abutting Jasper in order to accommodate logging and hydro-electric dam development on the Columbia River. The Mackenzie Mountains Reserve which covered the NWT portion of that enormous mountain range disappeared. The Nahanni watershed and many others were thus made open to development. The once enormous extent of these now diminished or vanished protected areas can be seen in the Atlas of Canada, 1950.

To the extent that any attention was paid to parks it was primarily focused on developing infrastructure to accommodate automobile tourism instead of new park creation or wilderness and wildlife preservation (with an important exception relating to improvements in carnivore conservation in our national parks). The Trans-Canada Highway was built through the heart of four of our western parks national parks and Hamber Park. Canadian park officials looked with envy at the US Park Service's Mission 66 infrastructure program and tried to emulate it. Parks Canada planners proposed building loop roads through the wilderness backcountry of Banff and Jasper, as had been done in Yellowstone.

The Calgary Olympic Association proposed transforming Banff National Park by hosting the Winter Olympics. The Government of Canada, to stimulate tourist infrastructure development at Lake Louise, solicited a massive proposal from Imperial Oil to be built by Architect Arthur Ericson out of "the marble of the 20th century" namely concrete. Senior Parks Canada officials were all for it (Touche).

Around the same time that these assaults on protected areas were mounting, the overwhelming faith in science, government and industry to do the right thing began to fade. The widespread use of chemicals to "improve" our world was killing birds at an alarming rate as Rachel Carson demonstrated in her widely read book Silent Spring in 1962. US president Dwight Eisenhower warned the world to beware "the military-industrial complex" in his 1960 retirement address, notwithstanding his impeccable military credentials. By the mid-1960s the Vietnam War was going badly and was the subject of many falsehoods from society's leaders. The US civil rights movement was gearing up. Having seen what happened to cities like Boston, urban activists in the US and Canada stood up to prevent freeways from being built through the hearts out of their cities. The Wilderness Society and Sierra Club mobilized to pass a federal law to protect wilderness in the US. Canadians watched these developments on television and others studied in the turbulent atmosphere of US college campuses where they learned the power of activism to make change.

The Great Reawakening of Canadian Civil Society in the 1960s

The *cri de coeur* from Alvin Hamilton, Minister responsible for National Parks quoted at the opening of this paper, finally awoke Canadian civil society from its long neglectful slumber regarding protected areas. The idea of a citizen's organization to rise to the defense of parks was expressed at 1962 Resources for Tomorrow conference of the Federal Provincial Parks Executive Association. In response a group of people came together to create the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada in 1963. Today it is called the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) or in French SNAP (la societe pour la protection de la nature et les parcs du Canada). That same decade the Canadian Audubon Society took on new life as the Canadian Nature Federation and World Wildlife Fund of Canada was organized in Toronto. Important provincial groups like Ontario's Algonquin Wildlands League, the Sierra Club in BC, and

the Alberta Wilderness Association were established as were local groups like the Bow Valley Naturalists.

NPPAC led the charge for protected areas on the national stage. It set as its first task the defense of the magnificent legacy of Canada's National Parks. The Minutes of the NPPAC board meeting of November 12, 1965 reveal the extent of the problem that had arisen while civil society slept: "Pressures on governments from industrial and professional associations to allow the extraction of so-called resources from the parks continue...At its 1964 convention the Canadian Institute of Forestry passed a resolution urging the Government of Canada to permit lumbering in the national parks on the grounds that the timber stands were going to waste. In June of this year the BC Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution urging that mining in the National Parks be allowed. Also last June the Ontario Mining Association decided to embark on a campaign to try to convince the people of Ontario that mining in Provincial Parks would be good for the Province."

NPPAC found a symbolic issue of great importance. It took on an international fight to safeguard Banff from the enormous impact of hosting the Winter Olympics. It was an ugly and personal fight that was ultimately won.

This experience taught its key members that confusion about the role and purpose of national parks was part of the problem. Working with the fledgling University of Calgary NPPAC helped organize the Parks for Tomorrow Conference in 1968. This seminal conference set the forward ideological trajectory of parks in Canada for many years and was the U of C's first major international conference. Today we celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Some key individuals took the lead during that period. Many of them are still active today. The conference was organized by Gordon Nelson and Bob Scace who is one of the lead organizers of this conference. Gordon Nelson led the fight to prevent Parks Canada's tourist roads from carving up the wilderness of Banff and Jasper. The park planner responsible for conceiving and implementing that project once said to the author in a bar "that damn Gordon Nelson. He stopped that road project". Gordon's legacy of civic activism, professional publications, thematic conferences and students who now practice in the parks and protected areas field across the country is a basic cornerstone of conservation in Canada today.

The next fight involving civil society and national parks was even bigger. It involved a massive four season resort called Village Lake Louise which the federal government had solicited Imperial Oil, a subsidiary of Exxon, the world's largest oil company, to build. Here were corporate and government Goliaths. But there were civil society Davids too.

Stephen Herrero left Berkeley California for a position at the University of Calgary. He helped lead the fight against Village Lake Louise and his grizzly bear research transformed our appreciation and respect for that animal which was once viewed as a problem in our national parks. (When I introduced him to a Superintendent of

Yellowstone the latter said “what an honour to meet you. Your book Bear Attacks, Their Causes and Avoidance is in every backcountry ranger cabin in our park”. Dr Herrero was the author’s first mentor as an activist.)

The Calgary-Banff Chapter of NPPAC led by Herrero, Nelson, and Scace, and the Banff-based Bow Valley Naturalists carried the fight in Alberta. Gavin Henderson of NPPAC led the national fight from Toronto which included a “cut-up your Esso credit card” campaign. Thousands of cut-up credit cards were mailed to the company’s president. The combined effect of these actions to mobilize the Canadian public forced public hearings for what was already thought by government and Esso to be an approved project.

Rodney Touche, who was intimately involved in the Lake Louise ski hill for many years, wrote a book of reminiscences from the developer’s point of view. He quotes Parks Canada’s Assistant Deputy Minister of the day John Gordon “Although John Gordon recognized that public concern for conservation “had developed with almost spectacular force in the in the last two to three years”, he made no suggestion to Village Lake Louise that its new mountain resort village might be in jeopardy.” (Touche). Ultimately, the public outcry led to cancellation of the project by the federal government.

Civil society undertook similar defense of parks and wilderness at the provincial level. The Wildlands League and others led a successful fight to ban logging form Quetico Wilderness Park in Ontario (Killan). The Alberta Wilderness Association led efforts to protect Alberta’s Eastern Slope. Citizens stood up to stop a huge mining project in Strathcona Provincial Park on Vancouver Island. Two references which provide much more detail are Gerry Killan’s Ontario’s Parks and Jeremy Wilson’s Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia. In the 1970s there were also important new parks created in British Columbia some of which is chronicled in Ric Careless’ To Save the Wild Earth. On the other hand, a disengaged public left Quebec and New Brunswick as provincial protected area “black holes” during most of the 20th century (with a few notable exceptions of parks created in the pre- WWII period).

In the early 1970s NPPAC also sought new federal parks. It was particularly prominent in the creation of Kluane, Ayuittuq and Nahanni National Park Reserves. The latter was the subject of a national campaign by NPPAC partly because the alternative to protecting the river was a hydro electric dam at Virginia Falls. A well publicized NPPAC field trip to Nahanni led by Dr. Jim Thorsell and a national speaking tour by Dr. George Scotter ignited the public interest. This activity corresponded with Jean Chrétien’s arrival as Minister responsible for national parks. In a celebrated five dollar bet, NPPAC president Al Frame challenged Chretien to create 10 new parks in his term. Chretien created 12, including La Mauricie in his own riding, and won the bet. As Prime Minister, Chretien continued this work. In 2002 he announced the national parks system expansion plan which would include ten new parks, five new marine protected areas and the expansion of three existing parks including Nahanni and Waterton. (He told the author that day that he still has the \$5 bill he won in the bet with NPPAC in the early 1970s.)

Prior to the great Village Lake Louise debate, parks decisions were made by Parks Canada staff and their political masters. The public was not engaged or consulted. The longer term result of that fight was much more public engagement in national park decision- making. But the victory at Lake Louise began to look Pyrrhic in the 1980s.

The 1980s were mostly bleak

There were few successes for parks and protected areas in the 1980s but they are worth noting. A massive national campaign by NGOs teamed up with the courageous efforts of the Haida people led to the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve in the lush temperate rainforests of the Queen Charlotte Islands. A grassroots effort led to protection of the Valhalla Mountains and western shoreline of Slocan Lake BC and BC's Stein Valley. Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan finally got off the ground. But massive clear-cut liquidation of old growth forests and destruction of grasslands due agricultural policies was more the norm than new parks like Gwaii Haanas or Grasslands. Drastic budget cuts in 1985 severely impaired the Canadian Wildlife Service, crippling that agency's ability to properly manage existing National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and largely halting efforts to create new ones. This legacy of a damaged CWS is still with us today.

Though the *National Parks Act* was amended in 1988 to include legal designation of wilderness inside parks as development free zones, to increase fines for poaching and to make ecological integrity the first consideration in park management plans, these had little impact. For despite the success in the early 1970s there was no final resolution of the commercial development debate in Banff National Park. Instead of single high profile projects like the Olympics and Village Lake Louise, throughout the 1980s there was a seemingly never ending proliferation of new hotels, proposed ski hill and golf course expansions and the town of Banff grew significantly as did the Lake Louise service centre.

The pace of development in Banff National Park amounted to half a billion dollars in commercial development over ten years and the Banff sewage system was overwhelmed to the point where raw sewage was discharged into the Bow River. Federal tourism infrastructure subsidies were given out to encourage development. Big expansions were proposed at Lake Louise and Sunshine Villager ski areas. One hotel owner said to me that "you felt like a fool if you didn't get in on it". Wildlife biologists raised the alarm that the growth of the town of Banff and expansion of outlying developments as well the newly twinned highway in the Bow Valley had created serious blockages to wildlife movements. The very purpose of the park was being forgotten. A giant three story shopping mall with indoor parking touting itself as "Banff's Great Indoors" was built with Parks Canada approval. Then planning authority was handed over to the newly created Town of Banff. And though this transfer was explicitly not one that gave away final say, it did not stop the deputy mayor from asserting Banff's independence from the federal government and the national park of which it had always formed part. Among the

many comments he made was “the whole of Canada forever wants to mingle in our affairs...Go to hell ,this is Banff. We live here.” (Treutler) A huge Korean church was proposed for Lake Louise to attract tourists from that country. A hotel owner wrote to his guests to describe groups who wanted to stop all this development as “lunatics (who) want to turn Banff into a wildlife sanctuary”. CPR wanted to expand its golf courses in rare montane habitat, new commercial projects were also proposed for Jasper and Waterton, thus risking the spread of commercialism. Variations of the doctrine of usefulness were used as a justification for this unprecedented surge in commercialization.

Civil society sets the agenda in the 1990s

It was obvious that fighting individual projects in this park environment was a fool’s game. So in 1992 CPAWS launched a campaign to end commercial development in Banff National Park (Locke, 1994). The campaign quickly ignited a national debate. Media (both French and English) covered the issue extensively. Notable were a feature length report on Radio Canada TV’s *Le point* and an above- the-fold Christmas Eve story in the Globe and Mail headlined “Banff’s Outlook Not a Pretty Picture”. CBC Television’s *The Nature of Things with David Suzuki* did a feature program on our national parks with Banff at its centre. A lawsuit was also launched regarding a last minute pre-election exemption of the Sunshine ski area’s expansion proposal from the environmental assessment process (Locke and Elgie).

The new Liberal Government quickly responded by announcing the Banff-Bow Valley Study. This multi-year study assembled experts and competing interests and took stock of the state of affairs. It reached the conclusion that Banff was deeply compromised and that development not only had to be stopped but reversed in certain areas (Bow Valley Study Task Force). Despite a fierce lobby from Canadian Pacific and the newly formed business and downhill skier lobby group called Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment, Minister Sheila Copps backed by Prime Minister Chretien announced that the study would be accepted and major parts implemented (Copps).

But the study did not cover the town of Banff and so a subsequent battle ensued. The town council after a local plebiscite decided to vote itself large amounts of further commercial development. A counter-vote by the Canadian public was organized by CPAWS at Mountain Equipment Co-op stores in several cities. Canadians from across the country voted to end commercial development in Banff in numbers that exceeded the votes cast in Banff. The result was a federal decision to end commercial development, the reduction of the town boundary and an amendment to the National Parks Act to remove the capacity to create other towns inside national parks.

In the 1990s civil society moved to the offensive on the new protected areas front too. At the international level, Our Common Future (1988), known also as the Brundtland Report on Sustainable Development, coincided with a major increase in public concern for the environment. It called for the world’s protected area estate to be at least tripled from the existing level of four percent. This galvanized action in Canada (Locke, 1993). Largely spearheaded by the World Wildlife Fund in partnership with CPAWS, Canada’s

Endangered Spaces Campaign was launched in 1989 with the express goal of moving from about percent protected areas in Canada to at least 12 percent by 2000 (Hummel). Over 600,000 people signed the Canadian Wilderness Charter which supported the campaign's goals.

Results of the 10 year effort varied across the country but the total protected areas estate in Canada more than doubled in 10 years from 2.95 percent to 6.84 percent (MacNamee, 2008). Notable successes occurred in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and despite a discouraging start, Ontario. Some good results were obtained in Alberta as well. A similar 12% goal was embraced by the Mike Harcourt Government in British Columbia where a widespread and vigorous civil society movement existed which included the Sierra Club, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Valhalla Wilderness Society, B.C Spaces for Nature, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, and CPAWS. BC achieved its target of 12% protection during the decade. It is important to emphasize here that while governments did the job, it was the sustained push from civil society that resulted in doubling the amount of Canada that was protected in parks and other protected areas. Jean Chretien, when he was minister responsible for parks in 1970, said it well:

“We will need even more public support than we have if our parkland is to meet the needs of the future. It won't be enough for those concerned to be content with telling each other how they feel. Politicians must know that the public wants more parks. Those in government who control the purse strings must be persuaded that park needs are a real and vital priority.” (NPPAC)

Moving from protecting “island parks” to large landscape conservation

The “12 percent at least” target was based on “representation”, the idea that characteristic samples of all natural regions of the country should be preserved (Hummel). But as the Endangered Spaces campaign was unfolding, the emerging science of conservation biology was convincingly demonstrating that island protected areas were not adequate to hold their ecological values through time. The facts were plain that twelve percent of the landscape is not enough to maintain ecological processes and viable populations of wide ranging species. The target of twelve percent presented the risk of becoming a cap that would ensure conservation failure if protected area efforts stopped because of “over-representation”.

Conservation biology gave rise to a civil society effort to conserve interconnected conservation areas at a North American scale led by The Wildlands Project, whose founders included notable conservation biologists Michael Soule and Reed Noss (Wild Earth). TWP and CPAWS came together in 1993 with many scientists and other civil society groups to create the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. Y2Y's goal was to enable nature to function at scale and allow species like grizzly bears to flourish along with humanity over the long term by ensuring connectivity between the region's emblematic parks and wilderness areas and the creation of new parks, especially in the north (Locke, 1994 and 1997). Y2Y is a civil-society driven project that has drawn

widespread support from NGOs and philanthropies and has attracted international attention (Yellowstone to Yukon, Chester). The Y2Y idea helped to inspire the creation of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area in British Columbia's Northern Rockies in the late 1990s. Covering 6.3 million hectares the MKMA is mix of new wilderness parks embedded in a matrix of special management zones intended to protect wilderness and wildlife for the long term (Sawchuk).

In the late 1990s, British Columbia citizen activists organized a campaign to protect the fjords, salmon streams and unlogged watersheds of the mid-coast. Cleverly rebranding the area as the Great Bear Rainforest, they secured important philanthropic support from a variety of American philanthropic foundations and ran a very successful public engagement campaign in the Lower Mainland media. In tandem, some activist groups targeted the international markets of forest products companies to prevent further logging of the area. First nations were also successfully engaged and a model was created that not only addressed their conservation interests but also their economic needs. A conservation area design based on conservation biology principles was developed to provide a rationale for the scale of conservation sought. Despite the BC government's election platform of "no new parks", it became very interested in conservation of the area. About \$60 million was raised from American and Canadian philanthropic supporters and finally in January, 2008 the Government of Canada made a financial contribution that sealed the deal.

The result was a conservation matrix that covered an area of 8.75 million hectares and created 110 "conservancies" in about one third of the area. These conservancies are a new form of protected area that was established under an amended Parks Act (Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act). They are set aside for the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environment, the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of first nations, protection and maintenance of their recreational values, and to ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with those purposes. A park use permit may be issued to authorize certain uses that in the opinion of the minister, will not restrict, prevent or inhibit the development, improvement or use of the conservancy in accordance with the purpose for which it was set aside but commercial logging, mining, large-scale hydro-electric power generation are expressly excluded (Parks Act)

A complex multi-faceted Great Bear Rainforest Agreement was also signed. Steps remain to fulfill all aspects of the agreements such as conservancy management planning, the enactment of biodiversity areas, and establishing a regional plan for conservation outside of protected areas (savethegreatbear.org).

At the end the 1990s Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia, who had previously supported conservation work in BC and elsewhere in the world, developed strong interest in international boreal forest conservation (International Boreal Conservation Campaign). Working with Canadians it initiated the Canadian Boreal Initiative. Together they developed a Boreal Forest Conservation Framework now signed onto by many NGOS, First Nations and businesses. Its goal is to protect at least fifty percent of the boreal forest

and ensure world class standards applied to extractive activities on the rest (Canadian Boreal Initiative). This is based on the best scientific information available about what truly effective conservation would require (Schmiegelow). It has been successful in enabling important conservation outcomes working with First Nations communities, NGOs and government (see *Aboriginal* discussion below).

By 2008, most of Canada's national NGOs with an interest in conservation had embraced the goal of protecting at least fifty percent of Canada's remaining wild areas and begun advocating for it publicly (Tomorrow Today).

On the parks integrity front, the success of the Banff-Bow Valley study and its wide acceptance by the public gave rise to a Canada-wide study of our national parks. The Panel on the Ecological Integrity of the National Parks of Canada was composed of academics, public servants, First nations and civil society members who looked into the national park system as a whole and found it wanting. It recommended a greatly increased investment in science and amendments to the National Parks Act to ensure the unquestioned primacy of ecological integrity in all aspects of park decision-making. Inspired in part by the Yellowstone to Yukon idea, the Panel also recommended that we move from considering parks as islands to managing parks in networks. This 1999 report was accepted and implemented to a significant degree (Parks Canada Agency, 2000). A few years later, after public process, Ontario also upgraded its provincial parks legislation to make ecological integrity the priority for its first class network of parks.

Thus the 21st century began with civil society playing a renewed and vigorous role in shaping both park management and new park creation.

International obligations unfulfilled to date

Canada is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity which obliges all parties to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Civil society has been remarkably silent about our responsibilities under this Convention in contrast to the intense public discussion about the Framework Convention Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

The far-sighted Programme of Work on Protected Areas developed pursuant to the CBD sets out an effective blueprint for action on the world's protected areas (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2005) with important reporting deadlines in 2010 and 2012. Even though Canada is doing one of the better jobs of interim reporting under the Convention, we are far behind in achieving the goals of the Programme of Work, particularly with marine protected areas. Indeed our record in marine conservation is appalling, with less than 1% of our waters protected despite the catastrophic decline in cod and salmon stocks we have witnessed in the last two decades. Given our wealth and protected areas experience, Canada should also take a lead in assisting developing nations with their protected areas.

Canada's performance under the Convention on Biological Diversity should be the focus of greater civil society interest and engagement.

The courts' slow recognition of the obvious primacy of civil society

Strangely, it took our courts a long time to overcome the inherent bias in our legal and economic system in favour of private ownership as opposed to recognizing the primary interest of civil society in protected areas. Thus in 1972, citizen Larry Green was refused standing (which means the right to bring a case to court) in his effort to stop a commercial gravel operation adjacent to Sandbanks Provincial Park, Ontario. But in the late 1980s the law of standing was loosened. The Sierra Legal Defense Fund (now Ecojustice) was opened in the early 1990s as a public interest law firm and its first big project was to work with CPAWS to sue the Minister of the Environment to stop logging in Wood Buffalo National Park. The suit was resolved by a consent judgment declaring logging illegal and invalid in national parks (Locke and Elgie). CPAWS standing was not even challenged. But in 1993 when CPAWS sued Sunshine Village ski-hill and the Minister of Environment, its standing was challenged. The federal court of appeal ultimately ruled that CPAWS did have standing to sue noting that "CPAWS has demonstrated, early in the process, a genuine interest as a public interest group. The primary objective of CPAWS and its members is to preserve the integrity of the ecosystem in Canada's parks and wilderness areas." Finally at end of the 20th century, civil society was recognized as having a right to sue to raise the public interest in parks and protected areas.

The principle of public ownership and civil society's legal standing to defend that right have become so quickly enshrined that in 2006 when the Government of Quebec wanted to sell off parts of Mount Orford National Park (Quebec calls its provincially established parks "national" parks) to promote condominium development allegedly to stimulate economic activity, they had to amend the Parks Act to remove the lands from the park or face a lawsuit. The Minister of the Environment resigned in protest over the amendment legislation. The privatization of this civil society asset triggered a massive public reaction that included 10,000 people marching in protest through the streets of Montreal. It became an election issue. The new minority government backed off substantially due to the public reaction but the issue remains in play. The strong public reaction to privatizing part of Mount Orford Park also killed a similar proposal for housing on valuable lands at the edge of Montreal in the Isle de Boucherville (Quebec) National Park. Similarly, strong public engagement has encouraged the Quebec government to make major advances, including establishing the Roster of Protected Areas that ensures proper standards for its protected areas. The percentage of Quebec's surface in protected area status has moved from 0.67 in 1999 to 6% in 2008 with promises of further action (Beauchamp).

Aboriginal rights have created an important new interest in protected areas

In the last 30 years, first people's rights have been recognized through jurisprudence and the Constitution Act of 1982. These rights have important implications for protected areas, particularly in regions where new treaties are negotiated. In some protected areas this gives the relevant aboriginal group standing of equivalence to civil society along with unique rights of harvest that are subject to the public interest in conservation. In others, like the new conservancies established under by BC government under the Great Bear Rainforest deal, aboriginal rights could be argued to be senior to civil society's interest. When these important aboriginal rights have been exercised in conjunction with civil society support, good things have resulted for protected areas.

The successful 1980s campaign to protect South Moresby Island in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve had significant leadership from the Haida and wide support from NGOs that elevated it to a national issue. It has had positive long-term consequences. The Haida now play a major role in park management. In the marine environment the Haida and the federal government have recently negotiated a memorandum of understanding to create a marine protected area in the Bowie Seamount which has been a focus of CPAWS campaign work in conjunction with the Haida (cpawsbc). Building on the national park reserve, the Haida have also recently achieved protection of nearly half their homeland through a combination of court challenges and negotiations with the province of BC to create new conservancies (British Columbia, 2007).

The campaign for the expansion for a massive expansion of Nahanni National Park reserve to protect the entire South Nahanni watershed and adjoining karst lands has been a combined effort of the Dehcho First Nations, and civil society (notably CPAWS, an NGO that was also critical to the creation of the first park there, and scientists Dr. John Weaver of Wildlife Conservation Society, Canada and Dr. Derek Ford). River outfitters (especially Neil Hartling) were also involved. The collective effort included a cross-country speaking tour that went to nineteen cities. The Dehcho have described this park expansion as their "gift to Canada" through which they would also maintain traditional harvest rights and co-management. In August 2007 Prime Minister Stephen Harper flew to Virginia Falls to announce a park expansion (Harper and Baird). Environment Minister John Baird has since then worked very hard to support what he calls a "massive expansion" of Nahanni Park, but we still await the final boundary.

In April 2008 the Sahtu people agreed with Canada to withdraw from mineral exploitation 7600 sq km in the headwaters of the South Nahanni River for proposed Nááts'ihch'oh national park that would abut the expanded Nahanni National Park (Parks Canada Agency, 2008). If all goes well the two new parks would protect ninety-nine percent of the South Nahanni watershed and the adjacent karstlands in national parks totaling about 39,000 sq km, which would be one of world's greatest parks.

The Dehcho First Nations have also advanced a land-use plan that calls for protection of about half their traditional area as part of their treaty negotiations with Canada. As of April, 2008 the amount of protected areas they seek is 25 percent in federal protected areas (part of which is Nahanni) and 24 percent in other conservation (Dehcho).

Other recent events in the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories show the power of effective collaboration between aboriginal peoples and civil society groups. The federal government's 2007 announcement of interim protection for the East Arm of Great Slave Lake for a national park, other nearby lands called Akaitcho, and also the Ramparts wetlands for National Wildlife Area, totaled over 100,000 square kilometers. Earlier in the year a new national historic site was created on two peninsulas (Sahoue and Edacho) of Great Bear Lake (Baird). While government departments like Parks Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service and the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy did important work, this protection was accomplished in significant measure because of collaborations between First Nations communities and Ducks Unlimited, World Wildlife Fund, and CPAWS with national co-ordination through the Canadian Boreal Initiative. Together these new sites amount to one of the largest conservation announcements in Canadian history (Parks Canada 2007) though some more after sales service is needed before they are permanently protected.

The future

The natural world is unraveling.

While Canada has created some of the world's finest protected areas they are not adequate to save our part of life on earth. Twenty-first century challenges like climate change, habitat fragmentation, species extinction and ocean fisheries depletion require an organized and forceful response from civil society centred on protecting at least half of Canada's wilderness lands and waters in effectively managed and interconnected protected areas.

One such effort is the newly launched *Big Wild* campaign, a shared effort of the Mountain Equipment Coop, which has retail stores across Canada and 2.7 million members, and CPAWS, a national grass-roots organization with volunteers and staff across the country. The campaign aims to build the public constituency for those goals through a variety of citizen engagement techniques including an interactive website (Bigwild.org). It will take this kind of effort and much more from civil society if we are to do with protected areas that which ought to do.

J.B. Harkin said: "What is needed in Canada today is an informed public opinion which will voice an indignant protest against any vulgarization of the beauty of our national parks or any invasion of their sanctity. Negative or passive good will that does nothing is of little use. We need fierce loyalties to back action." We need to take those words even further today. It is time for civil society to elevate protected areas to the centre of the public agenda.

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