



*Canadian*  
**WILDERNESS**

A publication of CPAWS • Fall 07 / Winter 08

# Caribou, where are you?

**Inside:**

Caribou, carbon and climate change  
Big step forward for Nahanni!

 **CPAWS**  
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

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# Toute Nature

Une publication de la Société pour la nature et les parcs du Canada



## **Cher membre,**

Notre organisation nationale désire mieux répondre à vos besoins, en particulier en ce qui concerne la langue de publication de l'information.

Si vous désirez recevoir le prochain numéro du *Canadian Wilderness* avec l'encart francophone *Toute Nature*, contactez nous.

**Merci de votre appui !**

**[info@cpaws.org](mailto:info@cpaws.org)  
1-800-333-WILD**

## **YOU'RE INVITED** to attend the 2007 CPAWS Annual General Meeting

**Sunday, November 25, 1PM**  
Room 156, National Library  
and Archives Canada  
395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4

The members will be presented the Annual Report and Audited Statements of 06-07. Members will be asked to ratify:

- the Board's resolution of Oct 3, 2007 to amend the Board structure (size, member appointment) and the associated by-laws;
- the slate of new trustees, including, in this year of proposed transition to a new Board structure, to waive the usual notice required for this slate.

For more details, please visit [cpaws.org](http://cpaws.org) or call CPAWS at 1-800-333-9453.

## **Make a Difference with a Special Gift to CPAWS**

You have a unique opportunity to protect some of the world's most important remaining intact wilderness here in Canada.

### **Gift of Securities**

Last year the Canadian government made it easier for you to make a gift of securities. You can turn one of your investments into a gift to CPAWS. This is a gift from your assets and not from your precious cash flow. That gift is fully exempt from any capital gain taxes. We will be able to issue you a tax receipt for the full market value of the securities gift at date of transfer.

### **Leaving a Bequest**

You can create a lasting gift by protecting Canada's natural heritage. A bequest is a legacy gift having lasting impact. It is simply a matter of including CPAWS in your estate plans. You can choose to leave CPAWS with a predetermined sum or a percentage of your estate. Planned today, this gift is not realized until your estate is disbursed.

Please consult your financial planner or visit [www.cpaws.org](http://www.cpaws.org) for more information, or contact David Jeffery, Director of Development at [djeffery@cpaws.org](mailto:djeffery@cpaws.org).





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**Cover:** Woodland Caribou in northern Ontario.

"Photographed on the Slate Islands, July 27 2006, about 8:30PM. Final evening in camp, preparing for early morning departure, up to this point many sightings of caribou but no photographs. This guy wandered into camp to bid us a fond farewell."

- Photographer Ted Simonett.

**Above:** Mountain Caribou. Photo by Wayne Sawchuk.

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## PRESIDENT'S DESK ●

# CPAWS is making big things happen

SHERRI WATSON

**I'm pleased to report that in the last six months, CPAWS has been a part of many successes.**

**N**ova Scotia's purchase of 10,000 ha of high value conservation lands and commitment to 12% protected areas, Manitoba's protection of Little Limestone Lake are just a couple of examples. But there were two special announcements that demonstrate what CPAWS and the power of our members nation-wide are all about.

When CPAWS started work on protecting the South Nahanni River watershed, we knew it would be a long-term venture. Creation of the National Park Reserve in 1972 was but a first step. So, over three decades later, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's commitment this past August to expand the National Park Reserve by placing an additional 28,800 km<sup>2</sup> under interim protection was greeted by whoops of joy! Public consultations on permanently expanding the park boundaries are expected this fall. CPAWS will again be in the vanguard to ensure mining activities in the watershed are not permitted and that the entire watershed is protected. When we succeed, Nahanni will become one of Canada's three biggest natural parks, providing a carbon reserve against climate change and habitat for many species, including the Woodland caribou, the focus of this newsletter.

The advancement on the Nahanni was due to the collaboration and involvement of every CPAWS chapter across Canada. Through a national tour we engaged scientists, the outdoors industry and renowned musicians. We enabled the voice

of the First Nations Dene peoples to be heard in the south. We won the involvement of individuals. Thousands of letters and post cards — 6,000 in the past year — to MPs and responsible ministers kept the Nahanni politically top-of-mind so a federal government newly concerned with green initiatives was aware of the importance Canadians place on this UNESCO World Heritage site and our Boreal ecosystem.

At a May 2007 meeting of the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), members confirmed that nature conservation must always be a primary goal of protected areas, paramount over economic benefits or sustainable use. CPAWS

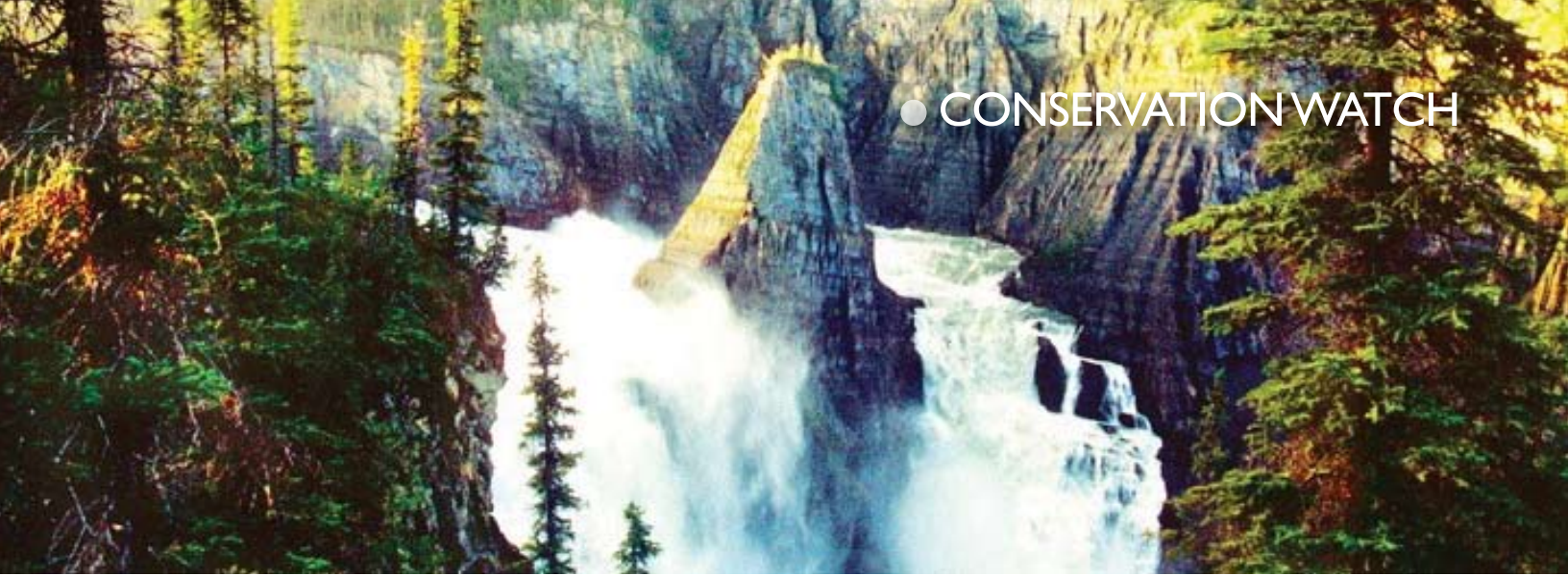
representatives played an active role at the meeting, and we will continue to promote our vision of conservation in a global economy that demands constant growth.

CPAWS is increasing our partnerships with environmentally responsible businesses like Mountain Equipment Co-op to provide more opportunities for Canadians to get involved in wilderness protection. With our vision of Canada as a global model for protection of wilderness, we think big and long term. But we're also getting things done right now to conserve nature from coast to coast to coast. ●

*Sherri Watson is CPAWS' National Board President.*







# Closer to protecting Nahanni forever!

ALISON WOODLEY

**With the help of thousands of Canadians who voiced their support for protecting Nahanni Forever, CPAWS' Nahanni campaign has taken a giant leap forward.**

On August 8th, 2007 Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Environment Minister John Baird flew to Nahanni National Park Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Northwest Territories, to announce the interim protection of 28,800 km<sup>2</sup> of land specifically for the purpose of expanding the national park. When added to the lands protected in the current 4766 km<sup>2</sup> park, almost 85% of the South Nahanni Watershed and Nahanni karstlands — an area larger than Vancouver Island — is now protected. Once the park boundaries are officially expanded by act of Parliament, Nahanni will become one of Canada's three biggest national parks.

The Nahanni watershed straddles the traditional territories of the Dehcho First Nations (85% of the watershed area) and the Sahtu Dene and Métis (15% of the watershed). The Prime Minister's announcement effectively protects the watershed and karstlands in the Dehcho region until October 2008 while the formal park expansion process is completed. Protecting the Nahanni watershed is a goal CPAWS shares with the Dehcho First Nations, who have also been working to achieve this for many years. In the Sahtu region discussions to protect the remaining 15% of the watershed are

proceeding through a separate process, and signs are positive there too.

Much more work is needed to ensure this recent federal action translates into permanent protection for the entire Nahanni watershed. The announcement does not affect existing mining rights in the watershed, including the Prairie Creek mine.

New park boundaries are being decided right now. At this critical time, CPAWS is calling on Canadians to mount a final wave of support for protecting the **entire** South Nahanni Watershed. ●

*Alison Woodley is National Northern Program Manager for CPAWS.*



## Take Action!

- Send a personal letter to the Prime Minister
- Phone your MP
- Tell your friends

**Go to [www.cpaws.org/nahanni](http://www.cpaws.org/nahanni) to learn more!**

## Nahanni by the numbers:

**40,000 km<sup>2</sup>**

Total size of South Nahanni watershed and adjacent karstlands

**4,766 km<sup>2</sup>**

Current Nahanni National Park Reserve

**28,800 km<sup>2</sup>**

August 2007 announcement of lands set aside for national park expansion until October 2008

**6,500 km<sup>2</sup>**

Lands still to be protected in the watershed (Nahanni Headwaters in Sahtu region)





# Saving Nova Scotia's last old growth forests

CHRIS MILLER

There are places in Nova Scotia where cool, fast-flowing streams still meander through impressive stands of towering, untouched old-growth forest. These few precious ecological gems have managed, against great odds, to escape centuries of disturbance by humans in one of the longest settled areas of North America.

But, just how much longer these incredible places will remain is unclear, as industry ramps up pressure to exploit the forests in an endless search for more and more wood supply.

Forest harvesting in Nova Scotia has reached unprecedented levels.

Each year, fifty-thousand hectares of forest are harvested, an area roughly equivalent in size to Kejimikujik National Park. Upwards of 90% of this harvesting is done using clearcuts, supported by a spidery network of roads that if pieced end-to-end would stretch around the Earth two-and-a-half times.

We're in crisis mode. The forests simply can't support the current levels of harvesting.

The fight to protect wilderness in Nova Scotia has been going on for years, and has brought ordinary citizens from rural areas and cities alike to the frontlines of this campaign. Clearcuts abound behind the thin veils of green kept standing along the scenic roadways. Nova Scotians are fed-up with the inaction and are demanding change.

CPAWS is supporting this public advocacy campaign with scientific credibility and expertise. We are developing and run-

ning a province-wide conservation analysis to identify and protect the most ecologically-significant areas remaining in the province, including sites important for wilderness values, old forest, rare species, significant ecosystems, and connectivity.

And, we're starting to get results. Early in 2007, the provincial government committed to expanding the protected areas system in Nova Scotia by 50% over the next seven

**We're in crisis mode. The forests simply can't support the current levels of harvesting.**

years and took the extra step of enshrining a 12% protected areas target in a new piece of environmental legislation.

This was followed by the single largest purchase of conservation lands in Nova Scotia's history: \$27 million worth of high conservation value properties from Bowater-Mersey Paper Inc. These acquisitions resulted in the creation of 27 new protected natural areas in parks and nature reserves.

We are encouraged by the progress being made, but all too aware of the urgency to keep moving forward. There is no room for second best. The future of our forests are at stake and a lot of people are counting on our success.

For now, only time will tell if that cool-running stream will continue to flow through the old-growth forest, or if it will be forced to run empty through a clearcut. ●

*Chris Miller is an ecologist and Wilderness Conservation Coordinator for CPAWS Nova Scotia.*

# Manitoba's colour changing lake protected

RON THIESSEN

## Public action required to make it permanent

After years of promoting conservation within the Interlake region, CPAWS welcomes provincial protection for Little Limestone Lake and surrounding lands. The area is safeguarded from industrial activities while the Manitoba government consults local First Nations and considers input from all citizens about the future of Manitoba's most amazing lake.

Little Limestone Lake, located near the northwest tip of Lake Winnipeg, is Earth's finest and largest marl lake. Marl is created when calcite, the chief constituent of limestone, is chemically precipitated from warm water. As the temperature rises, the quantity of marl increases, which changes the colour of the lake. It's common for the lake to transform from a brilliant turquoise in the morning, to a robin's egg blue by mid-afternoon.

As industrial logging and mining pursuits advance in the region, it's essential the province works swiftly with local First Nations and all Mani-

tobans to make certain the protected area is large enough to maintain the lake's health, as well as traditional activities and sustainable tourism opportunities for residents.

CPAWS is optimistic that protection of Little Limestone Lake will be a stepping-stone to other conservation initiatives within the Boreal wilderness in the Interlake region. The Boreal is the world's largest source of fresh water, the northern lungs of the planet, and mass quantities of carbon, keeping it safely out of the atmosphere, where it would exacerbate climate change. Conserving large sections of the Boreal will ensure these ecological services continue to function as an essential component of Earth's life support system. We look forward to working with all involved in creating a large protected areas network that will protect Mother Nature and provide jobs for local people. ●

*Ron Thiessen is Executive Director of CPAWS Manitoba*

### Take Action!

It's a critical time for everyone to let Manitoba Premier Gary Doer know how they feel about permanent protection of Little Limestone Lake.

Ensuring ecologically based boundaries that are sufficient to guard the lake's water quality is paramount. We know from experience that public support for establishing protected areas is key in moving governments to take action.

**Please go to [www.cpawsmb.org](http://www.cpawsmb.org) to quickly and conveniently send your letter.**



# Protecting Cree heritage and Caribou paradise

NICOLAS MAINVILLE

**In the heart of Quebec's Boreal Forest, the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree community is planning for its future, and CPAWS-Quebec is helping so that their efforts lead to a major conservation outcome.**

**W**ith future generations in mind, this community has decided to make future development depend not

on mines and forestry, but on ecotourism and culture sharing. The community's proposed new heritage park project will let everyone enjoy the beauty of the Boreal landscape, witness the amazing wilderness on their land and discover the traditional activities and values of the Cree people.

The Assinica Cree Heritage Lands project is part of the bilateral "Peace of the Braves" agreement signed in 2002, and represents one of the most promising conservation opportunities in the al-

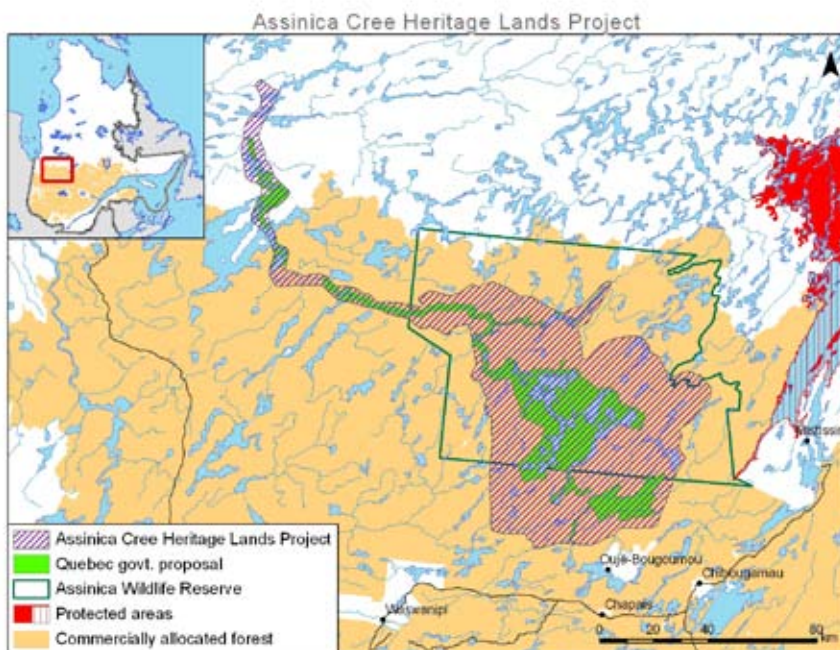
located Boreal forest of Quebec, because of its outstanding biodiversity. Covered by large, intact old growth forests, the Assinica area is a Woodland caribou hotspot with three calving herds, and home to the Assinica trout and many endangered species.

Amidst this exceptional environment exist cultural and spiritual sites of great value for the Cree people. The project includes archaeological sites, and special attention has been given to include traditional spiritual grounds within the park.

Unfortunately, the Cree Nation and the Quebec government have not yet reached an agreement on the project, mainly because of reticence on the part of the government to take large old growth forests out of the hands of industry. The "Peace of the Braves" agreement states that an unprotected area of nearly 9,000 km<sup>2</sup> known as the Assinica Wildlife Reserve should be transformed into a park. The Cree have proposed that 6,000 km<sup>2</sup> be designated as a park, with the rest sustainably developed to accommodate different uses.

However, the government has been blocking negotiations by proposing a protected area of less than 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, covering mainly water and peat lands and excluding Woodland caribou habitat and the archaeological sites proposed by the Cree. CPAWS-Quebec and other groups are helping the community ensure that their cultural values, large Woodland caribou habitat and other ecosystems will be protected. An upcoming public campaign will seek to increase pressure on the government and provide support to the Cree. Will the provincial government listen? ●

*Nicolas Mainville is the Boreal Campaign Coordinator for SNAP/CPAWS Quebec*





# Running • out of time



The elusive Woodland caribou is a barometer of the Boreal Forest's health. With ever-increasing development and climate change dramatically altering Canada's north, **CPAWS is committed to safeguarding a future for this national icon.**

# Turning back

## LIVVORS

**I'm standing in the middle of the frozen bay of a large lake in Woodland Caribou Provincial Park, Ontario. With me are my field technician, Phil, and the helicopter pilot, Eric. About 200 metres away from us is a herd of 30 woodland caribou, mostly females with their yearling calves.**

They are watching us with reserved curiosity – inquisitive but ready to turn and flee, should we suddenly appear threatening. Phil, Eric and I begin to approach cautiously, cameras in hand. This is the first time we have had the opportunity to photograph these elusive animals up close. All of our previous encounters were from aircraft and our photographs were of stampedes or merely the tracks left behind. We watch silently, snapping photos. Eventually the caribou lose interest in us and wander away, their greyish-brown bodies melting into the trees. We are thrilled and privileged to have finally seen them up close.

It is a rare privilege, as woodland caribou are a threatened species. In Ontario at the beginning of the 20th century, their range extended as far south as North Bay and the north shore of Lake Superior. As human developments – railways, roads and forestry – pushed north, so did the caribou. The old growth coniferous forest caribou rely on for secluded calving habitat and refugia from their chief predators, wolves, was steadily cut and replaced by young forest. Increased human access to caribou habitat lead to increased hunting mortality, until sport hunting for caribou by non-Aboriginals was banned in 1929. It is extremely difficult to obtain an accurate population estimate for caribou in Ontario's boreal forest, so it is easier to document their

decline by measuring range recession. The southern boundary of caribou range has receded north at a rate of approximately 34 km per decade, and currently about half of the historic caribou range is still occupied.

The situation is much more complex than just habitat loss. Prime habitat for woodland caribou is old growth coniferous forest. When this forest is logged, not only is the new growth unsuitable for caribou habitation, it attracts moose and deer. Higher numbers of these ungulates are able to support higher wolf populations. Caribou are a lot easier for wolves

**If caribou presence is best predicted by clearcuts that occurred 20 years ago, then the overlap of current forestry operations with caribou range is ominous. These populations are most likely doomed to extirpation — the “walking dead.”**

to catch, so more predators translates into higher predation pressure on caribou. Although caribou and wolves historically coexisted, when predator numbers increase, caribou are less able to cope than moose or deer. Unlike those animals, caribou don't have twins and reproduce at an older age. The changes to the predator-prey balance do not stop there. Linear features, such as roads, seismic lines and utility corridors, accompany human activities in the forest.

Wolves may use these as travel routes, allowing them to hunt with greater efficiency and gain access to once-secluded caribou habitat.

These changes are not an immediate outcome of landscape change. Scientists surmised there was a time lag between disturbance and caribou disappearance, perhaps on the order of decades. This posed a tremendous challenge to forest management; if caribou were still around five or ten years after a landscape disturbance, it would be reasonable to believe they were unaffected. Success or failure

of a landscape management strategy would take years to gauge. How big was this time lag, and would caribou have a greater probability of persistence if human-caused disturbances were buffered?

I set out to solve this puzzle in 2004, working with Jim Schaefer, a caribou expert at Trent University, and Bruce Pond, a landscape ecologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. After months of data collection — historical and current caribou range oc-



# the extinction clock



Photo: Liv Vors

LSV 200

cupancy and spatial data describing landscape disturbances — and seemingly endless statistics, I concluded that caribou persistence had the most negative relationship with forestry cutovers. I also found that cutovers should be buffered by at least 12 km for caribou to have a greater than 50 % chance of persistence. This buffer was far larger than the 1 km buffer that is currently required around lakes where caribou are known to calve.

The real “eureka” moment came when I discovered that 20 year-old cutovers were the best predictor of current caribou range occupancy. Presumably this was the minimum amount of time needed for changes in moose and wolf numbers to manifest themselves. Further digging in the literature revealed that moose numbers tend to peak about 15 years after logging, and wolf numbers peak in about six years after that. The numbers matched.

If caribou presence is best predicted by clearcuts that occurred 20 years ago, then the overlap of current forestry operations with caribou range is ominous. These populations are most likely doomed to extirpation — the “walking dead.”

When I used today’s clearcuts to predict caribou range 20 years from now, the forecast was grim. The southern boundary of continuous caribou range, which currently runs west from approximately Red Lake, to Lake Nipigon, to north of Cochrane near James Bay, is likely to recede from 50 to 200 km over the next two decades.

It may be too late to keep the caribou from vanishing in those areas, an “extinction debt” that must be paid. Ontario, however, is lucky. The northern third of its Boreal forest

**Above:** A herd of Woodland caribou scatter in Woodland Caribou Provincial Park, Ontario.

— caribou habitat — is still relatively intact. Limiting the human footprint in this area would give caribou the best chance of long-term persistence, and placing large buffers between human activities and caribou habitat would help safeguard the delicate balance between caribou and their predators.

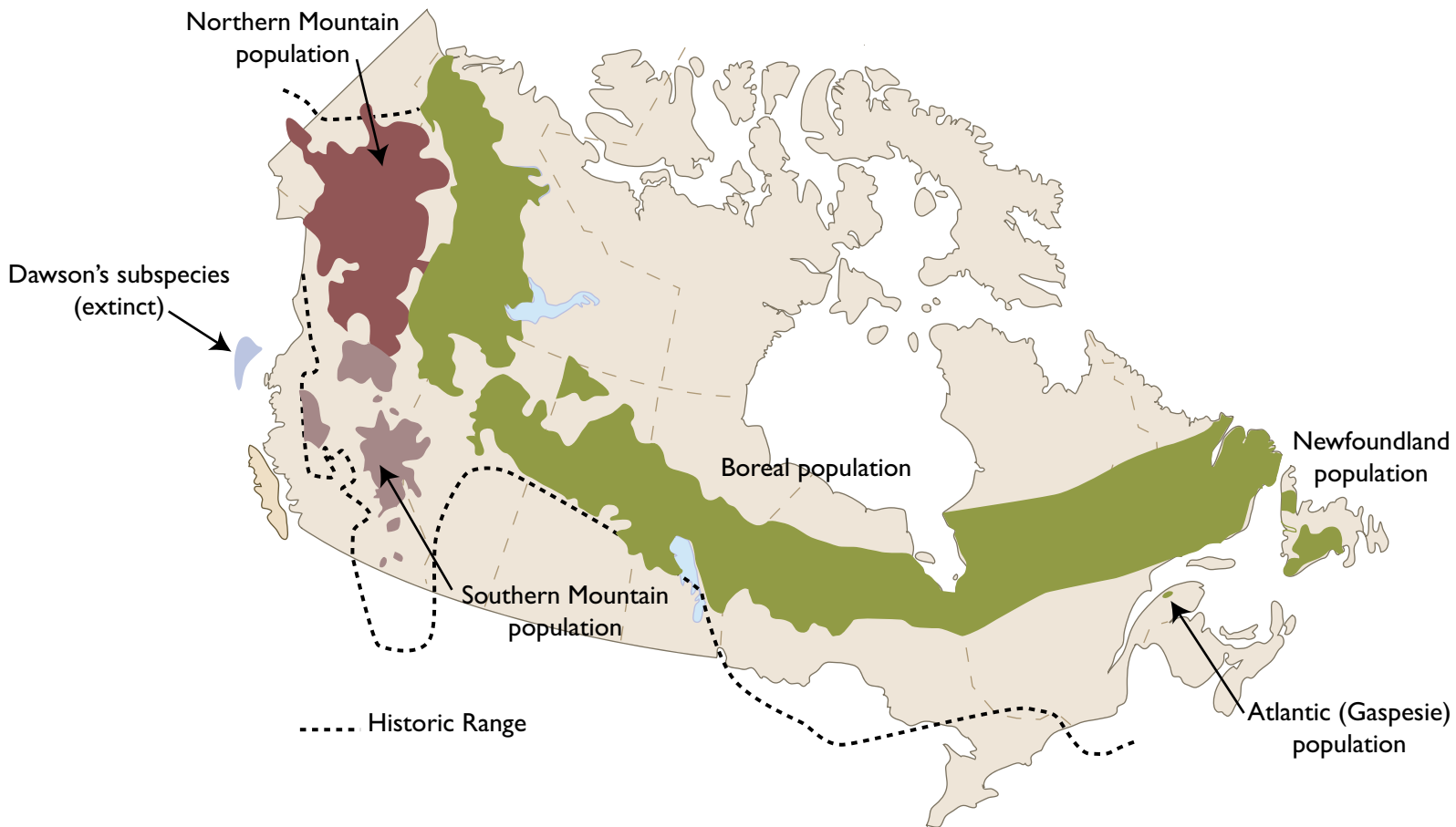
Leave all of this behind for now and return to the frozen bay where the caribou stood; like ghosts, their presence is still felt. The sun shines brightly in the late-winter sky, but the air still nips at our cheeks and noses. Silence, save for the occasional rustling of tree branches and the crunch of snow under our boots. I squint into the trees, beyond the shoreline, hoping to glimpse the caribou once more. But they are gone, going about their business of foraging for lichens, staying alert for predators, and surviving in this harshly beautiful forest as they have for millennia.

Somewhere, a raven screeches, and the spell is broken. Back to the helicopter, back to the motel in Red Lake, and eventually back to the incessant activity of southern Ontario, about as far away from wilderness as you can get. Yet that scene is as vivid and real now as it was then. I hope that next time, the caribou will let me watch a little longer. ●

*Liv Vors is a caribou biologist and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Alberta.*

# Caribou, where are you?

## The sorry status of Canada's Woodland Caribou



### EXTINCT: Dawson's

Known for their unique blend of biodiversity and ancient temperate rainforests, Haida Gwaii (the Queen Charlotte Islands) off of the coast of British Columbia were once home to the rarest of the five ecotypes of North American woodland caribou — the Dawson's caribou. In 1908 the last three of these small, grey-coloured caribou were killed, with the very last stuffed for a museum exhibit. In 2000 they were officially confirmed as extinct. The somewhat mysterious loss of the Dawson's subspecies of woodland caribou underlines the importance of knowing as much as possible of the needs of each caribou population and taking action to conserve their numbers.

### ENDANGERED: Atlantic-Gaspésie

The Atlantic-Gaspésie population of woodland caribou is a remnant of a herd that ranged from the Maritimes to New England when European settlers arrived. Habitat loss from logging and conversion of forest to farmland led to a population decline from 500 to 1000 individuals in the 1950s to 200 in the 1970s. The current population is estimated at 140 individuals. In the early 1990s, the Atlantic-Gaspésie population faced a 90% mortality rate of calves due to predation. The mortality rate has declined but the population is dangerously isolated from other populations. Recovery is also limited by lack of suitable habitat.

Some text reprinted with permission from Wilderness Committee Mapping and Research. Map based on COSEWIC caribou range map (2002)



## ENDANGERED: Southern Mountain

The only inland temperate rainforests in the world are found in the steep mountain ranges of southeast British Columbia and the northern sections of the three adjoining US states of Washington, Idaho and Montana. As unique as their old-growth forest habitat, these “rainforest” caribou — known as mountain caribou by the BC government — survive the winter by using their broad hooves to stand on top of deep snow and eat the lichen draped from old-growth trees. Mountain caribou, which are an ecotype of woodland caribou, have seen their numbers shrink by one-third over the past decade. Only 1,670 remain today. Logging of their old-growth forest homes alters the delicate ecosystem balance that has evolved for thousands of years, making habitat unusable and causing increased predation. A dramatic increase in backcountry recreation (snowmobiling and heli-skiing) is also believed to be contributing to the mountain caribou’s decline. They are red-listed (listed as endangered) by the BC government.

## THREATENED: Northern Mountain

Woodland caribou are doing relatively well on the northwestern edge of BC’s Chilcotin Plateau, thanks to agreements reached among conservationists, logging companies, governments, recreational users, wilderness tourism operators, snowmobile clubs, and guide-outfitters. Here the northern mountain ecotype of woodland caribou relies on old-growth pine forests for winter food, pawing away snow to get at the plants on the ground beneath, an activity called “cratering”. The creation of Itcha Ilgatchuz Park in 1994 protected the high-elevation forests and alpine meadows used by the herd for calving (109,000 ha). Subsequent agreements protected the low elevation old-growth pine forests surrounding the park, placing a further 92,000 ha off-limits to road-building and logging and severely restricting these activities in another 110,000 ha. Snowmobile and ATV access throughout the herd’s range is also voluntarily controlled. The herd has grown from 1,200 in 1990 to 2,800 today.

## THREATENED: Boreal

As industrial development moves northward into the Boreal Forest, woodland caribou are declining. Boreal woodland caribou require large areas of intact coniferous forest both to find food sources like lichens, readily found only in old forests, and for protection from predators. Development, like logging, oil-and-gas seismic lines or ATV trails, not only damage caribou habitat, but also open up areas of large, intact forest to predators like wolves, disease-carrying species like moose, and hunters. As a species, they are listed as threatened under the Federal Species at Risk Act.

## NOT AT RISK: Newfoundland

Canada’s sole healthy population of Woodland caribou is found on the island of Newfoundland. There are about 85,000 adult caribou here, and they are less subject to predation than caribou elsewhere in Canada because of the absence of wolves. Only one of 27 herds is reported as decreasing and most of the habitat appears secure. The recent arrival of coyotes, however, may increase predation pressure in the future.

# KNOW YOUR ‘BOU

A caribou is a caribou? Nope! The woodland caribou is one of several subspecies found in North America and Europe (where they are known as reindeer). Do you know your caribou?



### Woodland

*Rangifer tarandus caribou*

**Habitat:** Canada’s Boreal

**Identification:** The largest, darkest caribou

**Notes:** Reclusive, lives in small groups. Development has reduced the woodland caribou’s range dramatically over the last century.



### Barren ground

*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*

**Habitat:** Northern Boreal and Tundra

**Identification:** Their dark brown antlers are the largest among the caribou.

**Notes:** Canada’s most common caribou. Migrate in huge herds, may travel 1,200 km in a season. Still largely healthy, but extremely sensitive to human disturbance.



### Peary Caribou

*Rangifer tarandus peary*

**Habitat:** Tundra

**Identification:** Smallest of all the caribou, light coloured, grey velvet on antlers

**Notes:** Peary caribou don’t migrate. Due to changing Arctic weather conditions they’re starving, and listed as endangered.



### Santa’s Reindeer

*Rangifer tarandus polaris*

**Habitat:** North pole, your roof on Christmas eve

**Identification:** Red nose, power of flight

**Notes:** Feeds on cookies and milk.



# Caribou, carbon & climate change

Why the caribou in your pocket matters to the future of the planet.

JANET SUMNER

When he first arrived in Canada in 1888, none would have guessed that seven-year-old Emanuel Hahn from Germany would have such a lasting impact on the Canadian landscape.

But Hahn undeniably made his mark, becoming a leading sculptor in Canada for his designs of war memorials, civic monuments, and life-size tributes to such notables as Sir Adam Beck — a fixture on Toronto’s University Avenue since 1934.

Our interest in Hahn is not as a sculptor, but rather as an artist. For Hahn is the creator of the familiar caribou design on Canada’s twenty-five cent coin — a tribute to Canada’s wilderness and natural heritage.

When Hahn chose the caribou as his subject in the mid-1930s, this majestic animal was plentiful on the Canadian landscape. Caribou existed in most of our Boreal region, when forestry activity in most of the our Boreal region was still relatively young and the landscape mostly intact. No doubt Hahn would be shocked to learn that today across Canada Boreal woodland and mountain caribou have become a threatened species. Industrial

development is the major reason for the caribou’s decline, especially logging, which has both destroyed and fragmented this creature’s habitat. The forest-dwelling woodland caribou depend on large areas of mature forest and peatlands to avoid predators and find the slow-growing lichens that make up much of their winter diet. Clearcuts decimate their habitat and food source, while logging roads fragment the little habitat that remains.

Moose and deer move into newly cut areas to take advantage of young growth, bringing with them predators such as wolves and bears. Logging roads allow these predators, as well as human hunters, increased access to caribou, which can be devastating to their populations. Unlike moose and deer, woodland caribou have very low reproduction rates. A female caribou adds only one to two adult caribou to a herd in her lifetime.

In Ontario, industrial development has driven caribou increasingly further north — approximately 34 kilometres per decade. Today caribou populations are typically found only north of 50





degrees latitude — not coincidentally, the invisible line above which large-scale development is not permitted.

The latest research indicates that caribou need a median range of 9,000 square kilometres of undisturbed habitat, surrounded by a 12-kilometre buffer zone, to maintain local populations. This means that even Ontario's biggest parks such as Woodland Caribou Provincial Park, at 4,500 square kilometres, and Wabakimi Provincial Park at 8,900 square kilometres, are likely to be too small by themselves to sustain caribou.

But caribou isn't the only species whose survival is affected by an intact boreal forest. The boreal forest plays a critical role in controlling global climate change. Covering 58.5% of Canada's landmass, the Boreal ecosystem stores more carbon than any other landform on the planet, thus preventing it from being released to the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide.

When the Boreal forest is cut, its ability to absorb and store carbon is eliminated and carbon is released to the atmosphere. "Managed" boreal forests that replace virgin stands are estimated to store up to 12% less carbon than natural forests. Carbon storage is lost forever as harvests target less mature trees, and areas are deforested for roads and processing areas.

As more forest is cut and more carbon is released, the impacts of climate change increase. This becomes a growing threat to the forest itself. Scientists are concerned that if temperatures continue to rise, this will result in more Boreal forest fires, outbreaks of insect infestations and large-scale disturbance. As more forest is disrupted, more carbon will be released to the atmosphere — contributing to potentially catastrophic amounts. And so the cycle will continue.

It shouldn't be a stretch to understand that preserving significant areas of intact Boreal forest is in our own best interest. Maintaining these storehouses will curb the release of large quantities of carbon that would contribute to global warming and bring about potentially disastrous consequences. It will also ensure that Hahn's caribou on Canada's twenty-five cent coin remains a tribute to our wilderness heritage, rather than becoming another of his memorials. ●

*Janet Sumner is Executive Director of CPAWS Wildlands League in Toronto.*

## What's the link between caribou forests and carbon storage?

### How much carbon is in the Boreal Forest?

Boreal forests in Canada store between 164 and 266 tonnes of carbon per hectare, depending on their location, mainly in litter and soil. The remainder is stored in plants and trees. Peatlands store about 1,300 tonnes of carbon per hectare.

### How does this compare to other types of forests?

The world's Boreal forests store almost twice as much carbon as tropical forests and almost six times as much as temperate forests. Globally, Boreal forests are estimated to have 703 billion tonnes of carbon, tropical forests 375 billion tonnes, and temperate forests 121 billion tonnes.

### Why does the Boreal forest store more carbon than other systems?

Boreal forests have more carbon than other terrestrial ecosystems because of the large amount contained in boreal soils. The cold temperature of boreal soils reduces decomposition rates, resulting in deep organic soils that can be hundreds of years old.

### How much carbon is in Canada's Boreal?

An estimated 186 billion tonnes of carbon are stored in Canada's Boreal region. Of this, 71 billion tonnes are in forests (6 billion tonnes in biomass and 65 billion tonnes in forest soil) and 113 billion tonnes are in peat.

For full references, visit [www.wildlandsleague.org](http://www.wildlandsleague.org)

# A park to protect starry, starry nights

CARRIE WEST

**The most thrilling view in the proposed South Okanagan, BC national park could be the one above it.**



The strength of CPAWS lies in its outstanding volunteers and seldom has one more richly deserved recognition than Dr. Chris Purton – a quiet and generous advocate for the creation of a national park in the South Okanagan.

Chris is best known for his work at the local Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory (NRC-DRAO) near Penticton, BC. A quick look at the rapidly shrinking wilderness and increased urbanization (and the resulting loss of stars in the night sky) dismayed this remarkable man. So with anxious heart, he immediately offered to help the process of creating a permanent park to rescue some remnant of this unusual Canadian landscape – a swath of grasslands and dry, hot “pocket desert” in the midst of soggy, lush British Columbia.

“When I first moved here, a sky full of stars with the Milky Way arcing through them was a normal sight. The rate of urbanization is startling and our chance to enjoy a truly beautiful night sky is rapidly disappearing,” says Chris.

And the human invasion continues at an alarming rate. Like nowhere else in Canada, the warm central Okanagan Valley in British Columbia vanishes daily from new business development, retirement communities, and wineries. In fact, only 10 percent of the original sparse ecosystem that supported rare birds and bighorn sheep remains, making the creation of a national park important to the future of many B.C. species.

Chris continues to watch the rapid destruction, knowing that this sparse ecosystem and gorgeous night sky could never be brought back by wishful thinking or half-hearted efforts to regenerate already developed areas.

“This national park in the South Okanagan Similkameen will be a real triumph if it is created. It will stand testament to the ability of a civilization to pause in its relentless pursuit of “progress”, assess the damage, and alter its path,” says Chris. “This park will show the human race at its best – creating something selfless in the face of rampant self-interest.” ●

**Above:** The Milky Way as seen from Mount Kobau, located in the proposed South Okanagan – Similkameen national park.



Mount Kobau is something of a shrine for amateur astronomers. The dark night sky reveals the Milky Way stretching in a band from one horizon to another, bright enough to cast a shadow. From this vantage point, the dark lanes in the Milky Way are obvious to the naked eye.

These dark lanes are actually a jumble of dark clouds of gas and dust. Such a cloud gave birth to the Earth almost five billion years ago and the atoms from which humans are made were part of that process. One of the things that is lost when the Milky Way is no longer visible is the chance to see our own history. A new national park would protect the view of this remarkable sky and save a small piece of the Okanagan’s rapidly shrinking wilderness.

—Dr. Chris Purton

## Take action for a special place

**This is an SOS.** Please help establish a new South Okanagan Similkameen National Park. The final decision on creating a park will likely be made right after Christmas. This fall, Parks Canada is holding public meetings and consultations and finishing a socio-economic report. Here’s how you can help:

### Write a personal letter to:

<i>The Honourable John Baird,</i>	<i>The Honourable Gordon Campbell,</i>
<i>Minister of Environment</i>	<i>Premier of British Columbia</i>
<i>House of Commons</i>	<i>Office of the Premier</i>
<i>Wellington Street</i>	<i>Parliament Buildings</i>
<i>Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6</i>	<i>Victoria, BC V8V 1X4</i>

**Find out more at [cpawsbc.org](http://cpawsbc.org).**

Carrie West is Communications Coordinator for CPAWS British Columbia



# Creating a future for Newfoundland's Southwest Coast: A new national marine conservation area could help turn the corner

SABINE JESSEN

**Newfoundland's southwest coast is a place of amazing beauty, sad history and determined perseverance.**

This summer, I drove to the isolated town of Burgeo, south of Corner Brook, with Julie Huntington, the Acting Executive Director of the CPAWS Newfoundland and Labrador chapter. In this small, formerly bustling fishing community founded in the 1700s, we were met by Kim and Char Courtney of Pinnacle Tours.

With charming local stories and songs, this husband and wife team took us on a cruise of the southwest coast, a marine area ideal for federal protection. Both the human culture – still so entwined with the marine environment – and the ecological integrity of the coast, relatively untouched since the demise of the cod industry, continue to exist in tenuous harmony. This, an area where wild bursts of nature and diminishing ocean bounties, create a storied Canadiana worthy of preservation.

Kim and Char, our guides, together with the Burgeo Town Council, staunchly champion the creation of a national marine conservation area (NMCA) for this unique Newfoundland coastline. As we toured the blue-grey waters, they continually turned our attention to the historical and poignant memories of Newfoundland's rich past.

Embarking from our small boat, we visited the two remaining outpost communities at Grey River and Francois, both tucked into the base of the imposing granite cliffs, as well as all that

remains of other outposts, — Cape La Hune, Reuben's Cove, Parson's Harbour, and Rencontre — which were deserted during the government imposed resettlement program in the 1960s.

Today, these romantic names have been replaced in government lingo by the term "Atlantic region 7." This clinical title refers to the Laurentian Channel in Parks Canada's marine natural region's framework and includes the chilly waters off the west and southwest coasts of Newfoundland, extending into the Gulf of St. Lawrence south of Anticosti Island. It is the government's official plan to protect a representative sample of this marine environment as a NMCA — one site in this large marine region.

In a report prepared in 1996, a number of potential sites were identified. One of these lies in this culture-rich area we toured on Kim and Char's boat, off the southwest coast of Newfoundland. Roughly located between Port-aux-Basques and the Burin Peninsula, this proposed site for an NMCA on the southwest coast includes low sandy beaches to the west and immense granite cliffs and deep fjords to the east. It is the largest, undeveloped alpine coastline in Canada. The coast is ice-free year round, providing winter ranges for blue, humpback, fin and killer whales. Summer residents of note are leatherback turtles.

In his latest book, *Bay of Spirits: A Love Story*, Farley Mowat describes this southwest coast:

*Fifty thousand years ago this great Rock was mastered by a tyranny of ice that stripped it of soil and vegetation and carried the detritus eastward to form the Grand Banks. The ice grinding relentlessly across the southern*

*coast slashed a series of particularly deep fjords through the granite sea cliffs. Every few miles an opening – sometimes a narrow knife wound, sometimes wide enough to admit a dozen ships sailing abreast.*

When you tour this jagged coastline, it is easy to appreciate the grandeur in Farley Mowat's dramatic description and the passion that locals feel for their marine ecosystems. The sharp seascape shaped culture and lives, as these historic southern communities grew up relying heavily on the cod fishery. The sea here remains ice free when other parts of the Newfoundland coast are frozen.

After our boat tour, Julie and I met with the Burgeo Town Council, who see the benefits of an NMCA for their community, both in increased tourism jobs and needed protection of their marine environment. We reiterated CPAWS support for the NMCA and offered to assist the local communities with the feasibility study. We heard from impassioned local people, frustrated that the feasibility study still remains unannounced by Environment Minister John Baird. They asked for CPAWS help to ensure that it finally gets underway.

CPAWS has requested that Parks Canada get on with a feasibility study. We'll continue to press for the establishment of this NMCA to preserve the historic human culture and the environmentally-crucial coastline, both important elements in choosing the sites for Canada's future network of marine protected areas. ●

*Sabine Jessen is Manager of CPAWS' Oceans and Great Freshwater Lakes Program.*



Richard Giddons

# Poor parks in rich Alberta

CATHY SHIER

**As Alberta celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its parks and protected areas in 2007 and records the highest budget surplus in its history, a report from CPAWS' Northern Alberta chapter finds that the province's parks network is in trouble.**

On June 13, six days before the official 75th anniversary of Alberta Parks, we released *The State of Alberta's Parks and Protected Areas*: an analysis of the challenges and opportunities for ensuring ecological integrity.

Our report found that despite some recent reinvestment initiatives, the Alberta Parks Division continues to struggle to meet its primary mandate of preserving Alberta's diverse natural regions. Financial cutbacks, government re-organization and a lack of priority for the environment have resulted in nearly 20 years of neglect for the Alberta parks network. Reduced funding for the Alberta Parks Division has resulted in limited capacity for scientific monitoring, a backlog of management plans, a significant lack of enforcement officers, and the elimination of numerous heritage programs.

The systemic problems facing Alberta's parks and protected areas are primarily due to a lack of sufficient political support and leadership. The report finds that the failure of the government to effectively recognize and protect the province's ecological values has resulted in an incomplete network of small, isolated "islands" of parks and protected areas. Alberta is now ranked as having the weakest parks legislation in Canada by Ecojustice Canada. Parks and protected areas provide a wide range of benefits to all users. Parks are essential for protecting a region's biodiversity, including species at risk. If they are properly designed and managed, protected areas can be ecologi-

cal benchmarks — areas that represent a full range of habitat types and natural processes. These benchmarks are used in scientific and adaptive management techniques to maintain biodiversity in areas with sustainable industrial initiatives. Parks and protected areas also provide economic benefits and overall quality of life through tourism, recreation and ecosystem services.

CPAWS is working towards creating a healthy, well-funded and representative parks and protected areas network that will ensure that Alberta's environment is protected within its increasingly busy landscape. In our report, we recommend ways to improve the parks system including increasing funding, strengthening legislation and expanding the parks network to better represent the full range of diversity of Alberta's natural regions.

As Canada's most prosperous province, Alberta certainly has the means to develop a world-class, well-funded parks and protected areas network. It is also Alberta's responsibility. We're calling on the Alberta government to take the necessary steps to strengthen and enhance the Alberta parks network. We want nothing less than a parks network that genuinely celebrates and protects Alberta's rich natural heritage. ●

**To view the full report and a summary, please visit [www.cpawsnab.org](http://www.cpawsnab.org).**

*Cathy Shier is Executive Director of CPAWS Northern Alberta.*





## Paddling oil sands country

### CPAWS Northern Alberta raises awareness of the impact of oil sands development

In August, CPAWS Northern Alberta staff joined a group of more than 30 people on a canoe trip organized by the Pembina Institute through the heart of oil sands country. The goal of the voyage from Fort McMurray to Fort McKay was to heighten Albertans' awareness of the impacts of oil sands development on the Athabasca River.

Already, 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> of boreal forest has been leased for oil sands

strip-mining within the Athabasca watershed. CPAWS' 2006 report co-authored with the Pembina Institute, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*, on in-situ drilling operations — which extract deep bitumen reserves — indicates that this could impact nearly 14 million hectares of Boreal forest, or one-fifth of Alberta — an area the size of Florida.

The Boreal forest, its wetlands and the Athabasca River are all

**Above:** Just behind the trees hugging the Athabasca River, a clearcut scars the northern Alberta landscape.

interconnected. CPAWS is calling on the Alberta Government to take immediate action to protect areas in the Athabasca River watershed from the oil sands development rush to preserve wildlife, wilderness, water and areas for the traditional use of aboriginal people.

### Climate change: CPAWS-BC fights to protect biodiversity

As climate change warms British Columbia, CPAWS-BC is heating up its argument to adapt now by setting aside large tracts of connected land and seascapes — the best way to help save dwindling and endangered species.

With a new comprehensive climate change paper, CPAWS-BC is catching the ear of a provincial government consumed with emissions reductions. While such mitigation efforts are critical, the adaptation measures recommended by CPAWS-BC would see the creation of large wilderness corridors for species to migrate as temperature increases. These north-south corridors are paramount in helping to reduce the looming biodiversity crisis, sparked by numerous extinctions as southern creatures become trapped in fragmented and warming pockets of habitat.

The loss of these species will have profound effects on B.C.'s terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Increasingly, CPAWS-BC is drawing government attention to Canada's vulnerable, largely unprotected marine ecosystems, urging the government for formal protection of these warming waters.

CPAWS-BC will present its science-based paper to the Province's Cabinet Committee on Climate Change this fall, in advance of a national premiers' conference on adaptation. Educating provincial and federal politicians on the dangers of ignoring climate change adaptation measures remains a priority for CPAWS-BC.

To view the CPAWS-BC report, *Climate Change, Biodiversity and the Benefit of Healthy Ecosystems*, please visit [www.cpawsbc.org](http://www.cpawsbc.org)

## A great season for NWT conservation

The spring and summer of 2007 have seen big gains for protected areas in the Northwest Territories.

Environment Minister John Baird traveled to Yellowknife this Spring to sign a historic agreement between Parks Canada and the community of Déline to permanently protect Sahoyúé-Şhdacho on Great Bear Lake. In August, Prime Minister Stephen Harper traveled to Fort Simpson to announce an expanded land withdrawal in the Nahanni watershed (see pg. 5). The government also granted an interim land withdrawal in the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh, an area that CPAWS-NWT has been actively involved with for several years. Finally, the government has extended a land withdrawal in the Edézhíe Candidate Protected Area until October 2008.

CPAWS NWT continues to work with its partners in the Protected Areas Strategy to implement large-scale land conservation in the Mackenzie Valley, Mackenzie Mountains and Great Bear Lake.

## Still fighting to save Quebec's Mt. Orford Park

More than a year after announcing the sale of part of Mount-Orford Park to build condos and hotels, a decision that triggered a huge wave of opposition, the Quebec government stepped back and cancelled the call for developer proposals in April. It was in early 2006 that the Quebec government passed special legislation authorizing the sale of over 1240 acres of park land, a move contrary to the Parks Act.

For CPAWS and its partners at Coalition SOS Parc Orford, the cancellation of the sale is only a partial victory. In fact, the lands slated for condos have not been reinstated in the park, and building construction is still allowed.

Coalition Parc Orford intends to pursue actions so that the integrity of the park is fully guaranteed and the Parks Act respected.

## Thousands call for new Boreal park in Manitoba

CPAWS Manitoba is working closely with Fisher River Cree Nation to establish a new provincial park that would be four times the size of Winnipeg on the southwest basin of Lake Winnipeg. The scenic Ochiwasahow (Fisher Bay) park will be protected from all industrial development.

CPAWS and Fisher River Cree Nation have designed new boundaries for the proposed park based on the best mix of ecological and cultural considerations. The outstanding support for permanent protection of this area comes from local First Nations, many nearby communities, and people across Manitoba — to date, over 6,000 letters of support for the park have been sent to the Manitoba government.

**TAKE ACTION:** Voice your opinion about the future of the lands and waters of Fisher Bay — a boreal wilderness paradise! Please visit [www.cpawsmb.org](http://www.cpawsmb.org) to send a message to Manitoba Premier Gary Doer.



## Naturally Connecting the Maritimes

As development threatens the ecological integrity of the narrow land bridge connecting Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, two CPAWS chapters are working to protect it. The Chignecto Isthmus is the narrow, 23 kilometre strip that joins mainland Nova Scotia to New Brunswick and the rest of the continent. It is a vital place for wildlife such as black bear, moose, and lynx to roam, moving between habitats in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. If the Isthmus is not carefully conserved, the ecosystems that support this critical wildlife corridor will be eliminated, possibly causing the extirpation of some species, and definitely limiting their ability to move north or south to adapt to a changing climate.

CPAWS New Brunswick and CPAWS Nova Scotia are working together on a project, funded by The EJLB Foundation, to conserve the Isthmus' ecological connectivity. Over the next year, chapter staff will meet with local organizations and governments to ensure that those who make decisions about development, roads and forest management will take action to conserve the ecological linkages on and around the Chignecto Isthmus. Please visit [www.cpawsnb.org](http://www.cpawsnb.org) for more information.





Ian Smith

## Mega-quarry threatens Nova Scotia's Digby Neck

CPAWS Nova Scotia is pressing for the Digby Neck and Islands to be designated as a National Marine Conservation Area in the face of a proposal by a foreign multi-national company to build a 150 hectare aggregate quarry and shipping terminal on the coast. The development would take place next to one of the most significant ecological areas of the Bay of Fundy.

The proposed Whites Point Quarry and Marine Terminal threatens the highly endangered North Atlantic Right

whale, which is teetering on the brink of extinction. The Digby Neck area is also home to many other whales and marine mammals that could be affected by blasting and shipping, and is an important location for migratory birds and a number of rare coastal plants.

Public hearings on the proposed mega-quarry project wrapped up in September, and a report will soon be submitted to government by an independent review panel.

## Glen Davis: A conservation giant

The Board of Trustees and staff of CPAWS were very sad to learn of the death of Glen Davis. Glen was a long-time friend of CPAWS and one of the greatest supporters of wilderness conservation work across Canada. From his role as treasurer of our Board in the 1980s to his steadfast financial support of so many of our programs, Glen was a CPAWS friend. He will always be remembered as a man who cared passionately about Canadian wildlife and wilderness and those who fight to protect it.

His support of CPAWS, World Wildlife Fund, Sierra Club and many other organizations helped to double the parks and protected areas system in Canada, protect endangered species and bring improvements to government and corporate behaviour on public lands.



Juri Peepre

Glen Davis on the Snake River, Yukon, in 2003.



S. Nowotny

## Gatineau:

National capital region park needs better protection

Gatineau Park, the largest wilderness park in the National Capital region is a "park" in name alone. It lacks formal protection and its manager, the National Capital Commission (NCC), is a group better known for taking care of urban events like Winterlude and landmarks like the Rideau Canal Skateway.

With funding from Mountain Equipment Co-op, CPAWS Ottawa Valley chapter has prepared a new State of Gatineau Park report. The report recommends concrete actions by managers to improve the health of this unique wilderness area that lies within sight of Parliament Hill. CPAWS-OV has also produced an accompanying brochure for park users listing actions they can take too.

CPAWS-OV is recommending that park management be transferred from the NCC to Parks Canada, so that the park comes under the same "ecological integrity first" management rules as all other wilderness areas governed by the Canada National Parks Act.

CPAWS Ottawa Valley has long been an advocate for formal legal protection of Gatineau Park — the chapter was formed in response to a development plan for the park in 1969.

## Biking for CPAWS

It started as a joke during their annual 24-hour mountain bike relay. If Lakehead University students Ed Coles, Grant MacDonald and Val Bennett could stay awake and ride for 24 hours, why not just ride across the whole country? This summer, they did just that. And along the way, the trio raised more than \$8,200 for CPAWS.

"I have been interested in the environment since I was a child. I've always loved spending time in wilderness areas, but hate coming across the very visible signs of mismanagement that can be seen in many parks, let alone areas that are not protected," said Bennett.

"CPAWS is providing a valuable service by helping to ensure that Canada's parks are treated properly, that more areas are being protected, and that people are being educated about these issues."

The three 23 and 24 year old current and former students at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay have been planning



Val Bennett

their trip for almost a year.

"Biking is probably my favourite thing to do other outside of music," said MacDonald, "so what could be better than doing something you love for an entire summer while raising money for a charity you respect?"

The three indefatigable bikers completed the trip from the Pacific to the Atlantic in three months. View their trip diary at [www.bikingforcpaws.ca](http://www.bikingforcpaws.ca).

Val Bennett and Grant MacDonald halfway across their cross-country bike tour in July 2007.



Janet and John Blachford with CPAWS' Alison Woodley (right).

## John Blachford: A man of vision

It was the CPAWS name that caught his attention, but John Blachford was most impressed by the enthusiastic crowd at his first CPAWS event, the 2002 Annual General Meeting in Montreal. "I realized I was surrounded by a bunch of wilderness keepers."

Mr. Blachford has always loved being outdoors and in particular enjoys whitewater paddling. He grew up exploring the northern rivers in Quebec, but it was paddling the South Nahanni River with his wife Janet in 1998 that re-ignited his passion for the north and for paddling. Since then he has paddled a northern

river every summer.

It is this passion that connects Mr. Blachford to CPAWS; he wants to ensure that these special places remain unspoiled and intact.

Mr. Blachford and his wife Janet have been generous supporters of CPAWS in many ways through the years. In April, they hosted a prestigious reception as part of the 2007 CPAWS national tour, *Journey to the Yukon's Three Rivers*. CPAWS is very grateful for all the support Mr. Blachford has given to CPAWS and will continue to work closely with him on our conservation initiatives – thank you John!



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# DON'T LET IT COME TO THIS.

Far too much Canadian wilderness is being dug up, cut down, or paved over. Small, fragmented areas that are temporarily spared are not enough. Not for you. Not for wildlife.

We know this matters to members of MEC and to Canadians at large. Our members have asked us to go beyond our long-standing financial support for conservation in Canada, and to take a leadership role.

That's why we're allying with CPAWS to launch The Big Wild, Canada's wilderness protection movement. With two and a half million members of MEC and the power of CPAWS, we're big enough to matter. A lot.

Learn the latest at [thebigwild.ca](http://thebigwild.ca).

