

# Canadian WILDERNESS

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Can wind power  
work for wildlife?



 **CPAWS**  
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

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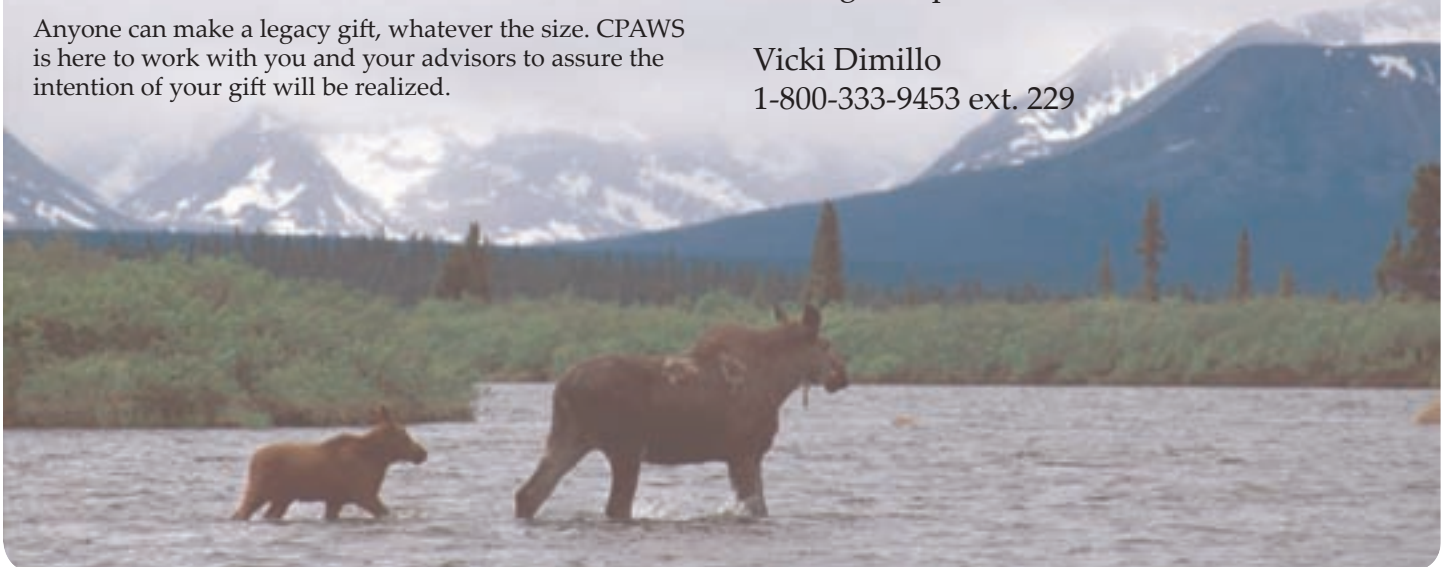
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*COVER: “My father-in-law made this cardinal weather vane for us last year. Every time my husband sees it flapping in the wind, he tells me that he wants to put up a windmill in our backyard.” Photo: Terra Stamps*

*ABOVE: “Sometimes, on Kaska territory, you can round a bend in a river and encounter 30 moose shoulder-deep in water that pours off their antlers. It is a breathtaking sight,” says CPAWS BC director Chloe O’Loughlin. Learn more about the Kaska territory on page 11. Photo: Wayne Sawchuk*



CPAWS is Canada's voice for wilderness. For over 45 years, we've played a lead role in creating over two-thirds of Canada's protected areas.

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## PRESIDENT'S DESK ●

# Hope Springs Eternal

SHERRI WATSON



As I write, March is coming in like a lion at -22°C, and I am guilty of wishing for some "global warming". Not really, of course—climate change has so many adverse effects the world over, and it is arguably the greatest long-term threat to biodiversity. Already, we are close to the two to three degree celsius increase over pre-industrial temperatures that scientists forecast will drive 20 to 30 percent of species-at-risk to extinction.

Finding ecologically appropriate alternatives to greenhouse gas-intensive energy production is a critical priority. In Canada, the most intensive and extensive threats to our ecosystems are from the tar sands, oil and gas exploration, and pipeline infrastructure. The good news is that alternatives are possible. We can immediately embark on reduction of emissions through energy use reduction.

While energy technology is not CPAWS' business, we do have an important role in helping to find the most efficient ones with least negative effects. This issue compares the effects on nature of some alternatives. And as you will read, CPAWS national staffer Chris Henschel is promoting new rules for carbon trading domestically and internationally that will protect the carbon stored in our forests and marine environments. We're engaged in this work because preserving wilderness ecosystems—which in turn purify our air and water—is just as important as reducing carbon emissions.

The economic "meltdown", in combination with climate change, may give us more of a push than ever before to move to a new sustainable society. Clean energy technology in particular could represent a real transformation

with extraordinary opportunities for wealth creation to the tune of trillions of dollars, according to Harvard professors Vietro and Reinhardt, boosting us out of recession.

So there is lots of hope. Not the least, hanging up my skates and skis as bird songs change to mating calls, the snows melt, and trickling waters sing their way to rivers and lakes to get ready for my kayak. ●

*Sherri Watson is CPAWS' National President.*

## A note to our supporters

In this economic climate, CPAWS, like the rest of the world, is responding. Our conservation work remains as important as ever and we will strive to keep it growing.

Thank you for your commitment to conservation and loyalty to CPAWS. It's what allows us to protect wilderness now and forever.

Supporters like you have remained steadfast in their support, and we are extremely grateful. We are planning for tough times by reducing meetings and mailings.

Some ways to support our work without opening your wallet:

- Transfer air travel points to CPAWS to reduce meeting costs—some just have to take place in person.
- Request email instead of paper correspondence at [cpaws.org/email](http://cpaws.org/email)
- Leave a legacy gift. Learn more on the inside front cover of this issue.



photo: Ted Simonett

## Boreal woodland caribou habitat needs urgent protection: report

CPAWS welcomed the April 9 release of a groundbreaking report from Environment Canada that underscores the importance of protecting large areas of Boreal forest wilderness that are home to Canada's nationally at risk woodland caribou.

"This report is the most extensive scientific review ever conducted of the status of this nationally threatened species," says Aran O'Carroll, National Manager, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, for CPAWS.

"The woodland caribou is one of Canada's most treasured animals, and this report shows that it is in worse trouble than we previously thought," continues O'Carroll. That is because of continuing destruction of caribou habitat from industrial development and road building.

"CPAWS is calling for an immediate pause to logging and new development activity in critical caribou habitat," he says. "We have to tackle the problem of habitat loss while we take the next step of putting measures in place for the species' long-term survival. The caribou cannot wait – and neither should we," Mr. O'Carroll argues.

**Learn more at [caribouandyou.ca](http://caribouandyou.ca).**

## National campaign updates



photo: CPAWS BC

### The right to paddle

For over a century, The Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) has protected rivers, streams and creeks from development projects that impact the environment and obstruct navigation. CPAWS actively encouraged the federal government to remove amendments to the NWPA from the 2009 Budget Bill that we fear will erode the NWPA's legacy of protection. The Bill has been passed.

We're still looking for ways to bring back the NWPA's protections. Jay Morrison, of cross-Canada paddling fame, is leading CPAWS' Right to Paddle committee.

To get involved, contact Jay at [jaymorrison@rogers.com](mailto:jaymorrison@rogers.com)



photo: Bill Mason Productions

### Protecting Nahanni forever

As we reported in the last issue of Canadian Wilderness, Nahanni National Park's expansion has yet to be finalized.

We expect the final park boundary announcement soon, however. Stay tuned!

To keep up with breaking news, please visit [cpaws.org](http://cpaws.org). You can follow us with an RSS feed, and sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter.

# How green is your energy?

Federal and provincial governments are providing major incentives for alternative power projects.

In the rush for green energy, it's important that developers take steps to ensure a positive outcome for wildlife and landscapes.

## Energy Form

## The good news

## The bad news

## Making it greener

### Wind

Wind is a renewable, pollution-free source of energy.

Wind farms require significant road and power infrastructure.

Developers should place new farms away from wildlife migration, calving or key feeding areas, and existing and proposed protected areas. Brownfields and marginal farm lands are a better choice.

### Hydro

Traditional hydro, consisting of a dam and reservoir, provides renewable, predictable energy output.

Traditional hydro disrupts aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

Run of the river hydro, as its name suggests, is placed alongside a river. Its impact on wildlife can be mitigated, for example, with spawning ladders for fish.

However, run of the river is less reliable than traditional hydro—its output depends on natural fluctuations. As with other forms of energy, hydro should be sited away from delicate ecosystems.

### Biomass

Burning sawmill, pulp mill waste and agricultural residues is an efficient way to create energy from waste. Purpose-grown grasses such as switch grass are promising sources as well.

Biomass derived from forest "waste" can decrease nutrient levels in the forest, remove critical habitat and increase the rate of forest access and fragmentation.

Before Canada and provinces jump on the biomass bandwagon, we should develop standards for retaining trees after logging, avoid removing organic material (especially from nutrient-poor sites) and limit road access in delicate ecoregions.

### Tidal

Tidal energy is predictable and emission-free. Potentially an abundant energy supply for coastal cities.

May have noise impacts on the marine environment, particularly whales; Can damage the ocean-bottom. Previous tidal projects in Nova Scotia have dammed tidal estuaries.

Tidal energy is relatively new, and there are many unknowns.

The Bay of Fundy, with the world's highest tides, is being considered for in-flow tidal turbines. Fundy is one of the richest marine environments in the country and contains important whale habitat, cold-water corals, and horse mussel reefs.

Sources: Pembina Institute, National Audubon Society, CPAWS

BY SUE NONOTNY

# Blowback

## What happens when renewable energy and wilderness values collide?

**B**rent Peterson grew up along MacCauley Lake in the cottage country north of Toronto. Tucked between the southeast border of Algonquin park and Madawaska Provincial Park, the Whitney forest contains rolling ridges of Canadian shield, dozens of lakes, and the eastern wolf, a species of special concern under the Species at Risk Act. Twenty-five hundred hectares of crown land just south of the lake is now slated for sale to a wind energy developer, and the 48-turbine wind farm proposal for the area is generating controversy.

The prospect of losing the wilderness experiences and vistas of the region has put Peterson in a role he never expected—leader of a community group founded to fight the project.

Wind farms can polarize communities. The turbines are highly visible, unfamiliar, and unlike many forms of power, often close to developed areas. The power they produce from the wind, on the other hand, is emission-free, renewable and clean.

“Green” power is about more than emissions. A renewed interest in sustainable energy, combined with provincial and national incentives, are creating a boom in wind development. After a slow start, Canadian wind installations are now growing at 30% per year, and turbines are pushing into areas of conservation concern. Without caution and mitigation from developers, this environmentally-friendly energy stands to make unlikely enemies.

In a *Science Matters* column, David Suzuki recently wrote, “It’s ludicrous to think that we must sacrifice all environmental considerations to get green

energy onto the grid. It’s not green if it causes negative ecological impacts.” With care, wind power could prove to be one of Canada’s most sustainable forms of energy. Much comes down to that famous real estate mantra—location, location, location.

### Narrow turbines, big footprint

The footprint of a single turbine is small, but the network of power collection infrastructure and roads required to build and service it are substantial and permanent. During construction, trucks by the thousands rumble back and forth to the site, full of materials and supplies. The roads must be maintained for the lifetime of the installations, and each turbine may only last 20–30 years.

The effect of the turbines themselves on large mammals is not well understood. We do know that fragmentation of intact forests takes a toll on many species. Predators and invasive species gain ac-

cess on the new roads, and disease can spread more easily.

Alpine ridges in the mountains of northern British Columbia are now being explored for high wind potential. These sensitive areas are often critical winter range for the Mountain Caribou, a federally designated species at risk. The caribou are drawn to the ridgetops, where high winds scour snow and expose forage.

The environmental assessment for one ridge project, the Dokie wind farm in northeastern British Columbia, claims simply that it will not “disrupt mountain caribou movement, mortality or habitat to a significant degree”. It’s unclear how the assessment was reached, as fragmentation is a well-studied contributor to herd decline. The results may not be immediate, but they are stark. Research by Liv Vors on the closely-related Woodland Caribou suggests that it may take 20 years for disturbance to push caribou out of an area, but the correlation between development and herd decline is clear.

Back in Ontario, the contested Whitney development site is not entirely undeveloped. A major transmission line and road placed in the fifties cuts diagonally through the land. But preliminary plans by RES Tech, the company behind the development, put the turbines and their roads perpendicular to existing roads—effectively slicing the area into quarters.

ABOVE: The Dokie Wind Project in northeastern British Columbia required significant road infrastructure on a previously undeveloped ridgetop in mountain caribou habitat. Photo: Wayne Sawchuk

“This is bulldozing into pure forest that is habitat for all the same animals (as those in Algonquin park)”, argues Peterson, who says he’d never considered himself an environmentalist before.

He points out that oaks on top of the ridges are a food resource for wildlife, and Eastern wolves, protected in Algonquin park, also use the development area. If development proceeds, he feels the turbines should be placed along the existing transmission line.

### The value of a wilderness experience

The environmental assessment process required of every new wind development addresses issues like wetland damage and erosion. It’s much harder to assess an installation’s effect on wilderness viewscapes—sightlines from areas of cultural or environmental importance. Sean Whittaker, Vice President of the Canadian Wind Energy Association, says, “The difficulty you run into is when people say ‘I don’t like the way they look’. You can’t tell people how they feel.”

CPAWS’ British Columbia chapter opposed wind development projects in the Muskwa Kechika management area in northeastern BC, an area recently lauded by National Geographic magazine as “a unique window on wildlife”. While their primary concern was the impact on the wildlife and sensitive ecosystems, the area’s status as one of the true wild places left in the Rockies played a role.

### Location is key

A wind farm’s effect on the wilderness experience is a legitimate issue, says Leah Deveaux, an environmental assessment and community coordinator with ORTECH Power, a consultant to wind power developers based in Mississauga, Ontario.

By avoiding environmentally sensitive areas, developers may reduce conflicts with communities and save money. Marginal farm land and brownfields are excellent choices for a new installation, according to Deveaux. Road and

power infrastructure may already exist, meaning the project requires less wild or arable land.

It’s ludicrous to think that we must sacrifice all environmental considerations to get green energy onto the grid. It’s not green if it causes negative ecological impacts.  
– David Suzuki

According to the Canadian Wind Atlas, the highly developed areas of Southern Ontario and the prairies are fairly promising wind resources. Siting in developed areas doesn’t address all concerns, however. Developers must still follow the environmental assessment process, and carefully monitor turbines for effects on birds and bats. Modern turbines are much friendlier to birds than earlier models, but it’s still vital that wind projects be situated away from bird migration routes, according to the National Audubon Society. Audubon supports wind power—recognizing that there will be some impact—as long as it is “planned, sited and operated in concert with other actions needed to minimize and mitigate their impacts on birds and other wildlife populations.”

### Good communication

Conflict arises when developers do the bare minimum of community consultation, says Deveaux. “Wind is proponent driven. In Ontario, the Ministry gives minimum requirements,” and it’s up to the developer to do more. In the case of Whitney, RES Tech announced the project to the community and held an open house, as required. But Peterson says follow up has yet to happen.

“Community input and stakeholder consultation is about 70% of the (plan-

ning) process.” “Developers have started to realize that the more consultation they do, the less it costs them. Consultation can be far cheaper than delays”, says Deveaux.

In the larger scheme of things, wind power’s footprint is relatively small compared to conventional energy sources such as oil and gas. No power infrastructure project is entirely without cultural and environmental implications. “Though there may be real issues to consider regarding wildlife, especially during the construction phase of any massive infrastructure project, the overall merit of wind over fossil fuels seem clear”, says Tracey Williams of CPAWS Northwest Territories.

“To ‘unhinge’ society from the hook of oil and natural gas pipelines is going to be very difficult, as we all know, and we have got to start finding ways to deliver large amounts of stable power to communities large and small,” says Williams.

Wind developers joke that there are 5 C’s of development, says Whittaker. “Communication, communication, communication, construction and communication.” Two more C’s—community and conservation—would go a long way towards allaying public concerns. Wind power developers must add to their balance sheets the incalculable expense of alienating the very people who could be wind power’s biggest cheerleaders—conservationists and outdoor recreationalists. “I feel wind development is appropriate on developed land”, says Peterson. “There are so few wilderness regions left. There are so many better places for wind.” •

*Sue Novotny is CPAWS’ Communications Manager.*

We’d love to hear your thoughts!  
Send feedback to [info@cpaws.org](mailto:info@cpaws.org).



# Burning down the house

Using the wood left behind in a logged forest to create energy is a hot idea among alternative energy advocates and governments. But in nature, nothing goes to waste.

BY TIM GRAY



Are Canada's forests the answer to meeting our energy needs without destroying our climate? To a growing number of government agencies, power providers and even some academic researchers, the answer is "yes."

Natural Resources Canada, for example, says that "Canada has vast renewable biomass resources and is able to use these resources to supply clean energy", while one academic group has proposed creating a biomass slurry pipeline to feed energy hungry Alberta tar sands development with wood chips from the BC interior.

In fact, the buzz in many energy circles right now is about using forest "waste" to displace high greenhouse gas energy sources like coal for the production of electricity or heat (or both). In Ontario, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has been experimenting with using both agriculture waste and wood pellets in its coal-fired power plants and trumpets biomass as a "carbon neutral" energy source.

"It's definitely a bit of a bandwagon," says Trevor Hesselink, forests program director with CPAWS Wildlands League—one he thinks may be rolling straight into dangerously uncharted territory.

Take, for example, the primary assumption about the benefit of using biomass, such as the limbs and branches left behind by forestry operations: that the carbon in the wood that is burned will be replaced by the carbon in the tree that grows in place of the one harvested. Hesselink points out that there are a few problems with this calculation.

First, this zero-sum equation doesn't include CO<sub>2</sub> released by logging operations and transporting material to generating stations that may be hundreds of kilometres from where a tree is cut. It also doesn't account for carbon released from forest soils. In fact, some studies suggest the real net result will depend greatly on the extent to which forest soils are disturbed during logging and that in high-disturbance areas or areas with low forest productivity (thin soils, poor nutrients), the result will be far from carbon neutral.

And then there is the time frame for taking that carbon back out of the atmosphere. If it takes 80-100 years for spruce trees to reach maturity in Canada's boreal forests, then we may have to wait close to a century to achieve true carbon neutrality when burning biomass. That is not particularly good news when scientists are warning us that it is critical to lower CO<sub>2</sub> releases right now.

However, to Keith Stewart, Climate Change Campaign Manager of WWF Canada, there is an important distinction

between fossil carbon sources and organic sources. "With fossil carbon, we have a conveyor belt that is taking carbon out of the ground and putting it into the atmosphere and unbalancing our climate in the process. On the other hand, it should be possible to use some bio carbon within the limits of the natural carbon cycle and not throw the climate out of balance." In other words, given that carbon is constantly being released and reabsorbed through the natural cycle of plant life, Stewart thinks we can find ways to use some biomass while displacing more destabilizing fossil fuel sources. The real question, he says, is "how much can we use, when, where and how?"

When it comes to calculating "how much" a critical issue for forest-based biomass is nutrient loss. The leaves, limbs and branches that many see as a ready source of new fuel are also the most nutrient rich part of the tree. Calling this material "waste" really ignores the vital role it plays in keeping forests healthy, Hesselink believes.

But one of the reasons this material has been targeted, he acknowledges, is that huge piles of it line roadsides throughout logged forests across Canada. This is a result of a shift over the last decade or so to a logging method called "full tree harvesting" where the entire tree is dragged to the roadside for processing into logs or chips. The leftovers are then mostly abandoned in piles

along roads or beside landings. To any casual observer, it is a biomass bonanza waiting to be burned.

"Full tree harvesting is all about economics—it has nothing to do with forest ecology," Hesselink says. And he questions studies that predict that forests aren't losing nutrients with this logging method. "The problem is that we've generally only been through one rotation [one cutting cycle] with these methods. It is too soon to tell what the real result will be," although Hesselink adds that some European countries that have used this method longer are now resorting to artificial fertilizers to boost forest nutrient levels.

But even with full tree harvesting, up to a quarter of a tree's structure ends up being broken away and left in the forest. And trees with crooks and bends may be left standing as unsuitable for harvest. That could change, Hesselink warns, if there is suddenly a larger financial incentive to bring every last bit of woody material possible out of the forest to sell as biomass. So a big upsurge in biomass usage could put an already problematic approach to forest harvesting into overdrive.

That doesn't mean we should write off biomass entirely, says Stewart. Biomass, he points out, has some unique advantages over other renewable power sources. Because the fuel can be stored, biomass is a good partner for other more intermit-

"Full tree harvesting is all about economics — it has nothing to do with forest ecology."

tent power sources like wind. “You can burn biomass when the wind is not blowing,” instead of using coal or natural gas to fill the gap, Stewart explains.

Biomass is also particularly well suited to applications where you want both heat and electricity. Combined heat and power systems (CHP) can have very high efficiency levels—up to 80-90%—which means that unlike many conventional power systems, they squeeze out every available unit of energy.

“Biomass can be a very useful transition fuel as we figure out better storage methods for other renewable sources and more fully integrate renewable power into our electricity system,” says Stewart.

Efficiency, Hesselink agrees, is the key word. For example, burning mill waste to produce both heat and power for a pulp mill will be a much more efficient use of biomass than replacing coal in a large generating plant that achieves less than 30% efficiency. And properly identifying what is truly waste is also critical, he feels. “Once material has been completely removed from the forest, it is no longer serving any ecological purpose” and could be suitable for use in biomass power systems. Right now, a third or more of the fibre actually taken from the forest becomes waste during forest product manufacturing. It is this material that is best suited to use in biomass systems, Hesselink believes. Overall, smaller systems located near supply sources also will be the most efficient for utilizing this material.

As for those piles along roadsides, Hesselink acknowledges that much of it represents “a boneyard” that is also serving little ecological purpose. We can use some of this material, but have to be careful to avoid creating “perverse incentives” to create more of it, he suggests.

We should also use biomass in solid form as much as possible, says Stewart, as this provides the best energy return. A number of recent studies have concluded that biomass-based liquid fuels are the least cost effective way to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to their high energy inputs. Unless better technology comes along, turning wood into pellets or other solid feedstocks will give us our best bang for the buck in both in energy dollars spent and greenhouse gas reductions.

But there is also a more fundamental question about whether producing biomass energy is really the best use for Canada’s forest. “A lot of the pressure



to use biomass for energy has really only developed because of the collapse of the forest industry,” Hesselink notes. “If the forest products market had not collapsed, biomass operators would not be able to compete economically for fibre.” Hesselink quotes a forest industry executive to finish the point: “If a tree takes 100 years to grow, we better turn it into something valuable.”

A rethink of our whole approach to forest use is long overdue, he continues, and instead of simply jumping on the biomass power bandwagon, Canadian policymakers should look closely at how we could rebuild a high-value forest industry that integrates biomass power in its operations.

As for biomass power itself, Stewart adds, “we have to be respectful of what Earth cycles can provide and not mine our biosphere like we’ve mined fossil carbon. We need strong rules and good science to map our way forward, and much of this doesn’t currently exist.” ●

*Tim Gray is Chair of CPAWS’ National Board of Trustees’ Conservation Committee*

LEFT: Standing dead wood in a forest is more than waste. It provides habitat, food, erosion control and cover, and a perch for this great grey owl.

Photo: Ian Ward

## Making biomass green

Before creating new demands on Canada’s forests we need to think about the risks and benefits. Some key questions:

- Is there a policy in place to ensure that enough standing live and dead trees, twigs and branches are being left behind after logging to ensure maintenance of habitat and nutrient levels in the forest?
- Is carbon being removed faster than the forest can regrow, both now and as climate change alters the balance?
- Will the resurgence of other forest industries end up competing with low value-added biomass use?



photo: Bryan Evans

## One step closer to protecting the Yukon's Three Rivers

By early April, the Peel Watershed Land Use Planning Commission is expected to have released a draft land use plan for the region. Expectations are high that it will propose protection of 54% of the magnificent 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> area that is home to the "Three Rivers" – the Wind, the Snake and the Bonnet Plume.

CPAWS reached out to Canadians to support protection of this area – a paddling dream destination and the northern anchor of the Yellowstone-to-Yukon wilderness corridor. Over 800 people responded by sending letters to the planning commission in support of the land use option that would protect 54% from all roads and industrial development. This option was one of three presented for public feedback. CPAWS Yukon, the Yukon Conservation Society, the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and the Guide Outfitting Association all agreed it was the best starting point for a land use plan.

### Go online, get involved!

We encourage you to stay involved at this critical time. Decisions are being made now that will shape the future of one of Canada's last intact mountain boreal ecosystems.

Visit [cpawsyukon.org](http://cpawsyukon.org) for more info, and visit [cpaws.org](http://cpaws.org) to join our action mailing list.

For information about the planning process visit [peel.planyukon.ca](http://peel.planyukon.ca)

## A step backwards for New Brunswick forests

The New Brunswick government's new public forest management strategy announced in February is a step backwards for forest conservation in the Eastern Woodlands, according to CPAWS New Brunswick.

"The plan's vague goal to increase protected areas from 4% of the public forest to between 6 and 8% should, in theory, help us protect important wild areas, such as Restigouche", says CPAWS NB Executive Director Roberta Clowater. "But the strategy's overall goal is to reduce the amount of public land managed to maintain old forests, riverbanks and other special wildlife habitats."

The plan calls for an increase in tree plantations to 28% of the public forest – well above the upper limit considered safe for maintaining biodiversity by conservation scientists and ecologists. CPAWS New Brunswick has called for changes to the strategy, and is encouraging the provincial government to respect the strong forest conservation values expressed by the public during consultations.

RIGHT: The Canada Lynx is found in northern New Brunswick forests, but is regionally endangered due to habitat fragmentation and destruction.



photo: Ashley Hockenberry

## Logging Banned in Manitoba Provincial Parks

After years of campaigns and tens of thousands of letters from citizens, last November the provincial government announced an end to industrial logging in provincial parks. Approximately 5,500 km<sup>2</sup>, an area 14 times the size of Winnipeg, will now be protected from commercial forestry in Manitoba.

CPAWS Manitoba Executive Director, Ron Thiessen, spoke alongside Premier Gary Doer and Conservation Minister Stan Struthers at the Legislative buildings on Friday, November 21.

“Our parks are spectacular areas”, said Thiessen. “They’re for recreation, edu-

cation, for future generations to enjoy and of course, to protect our wilderness and wildlife.”

“For the many of us who have dedicated countless hours toward this outcome, and for all Manitobans, this is a huge victory for conservation,” stated a jubilant Thiessen.

Effective April 1, 2009, industrial logging will be illegal in 79 out of 80 provincial parks, including all future parks. According to the province, “the complexity of agreements with commercial harvesters in Duck Mountain Provincial Park will not allow operations to end at this time.”



## Landmark progress for Quebec wilderness

It's been a historic year in Quebec conservation! The province added over 52,000 km<sup>2</sup> of new interim protected areas, including a third of the Dumoine River Watershed.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Jean Charest announced 14 new provincial parks and reaffirmed his commitment to protect 50% of the land north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel - the equivalent of over half a million km<sup>2</sup> of protected areas, nearly 16 times the size of Vancouver Island.

Learn more at [snapqc.org](http://snapqc.org).

ABOVE: Outgoing CPAWS (SNAP) Quebec executive director Marie-Eve Marchand and Premier Charest celebrate the announcement.



## The Wild West of Canada's Boreal Forest

### Kaska territory a “Conservation Hotspot”

There is a swath of wilderness straddling B.C. and the Yukon that is virtually untouched by industry. This is the wild west of Canada's Boreal forest. From grizzlies to caribou, all the native predators and prey still hunt and hide in this almost roadless landscape.

It's a remarkable territory for the Kaska peoples, who have cared for this land since time immemorial. This place – where they tread so lightly – is considered a “conservation hotspot” in North America. It may be the only place in the world where the complete suite of predator and ungulates survive together as our climate continues to change.

Funded by Environment Canada's EcoAction program, CPAWS BC has been providing technical and scientific support to the Kaska to support their efforts to keep this magnificent land intact. Together, we reviewed maps, flew to the tops of important mountains and took trips down untouched rivers to consider future uses for forests. We tested water quality, viewed potential mine sites and considered locations for potential new parks and protected areas.

Sometimes, on Kaska territory, you can round a bend in a river and encounter 30 moose shoulder-deep in water that pours off their antlers. It is a breathtaking sight – one that should always be a part of this wild world. As the Kaska make conservation plans for their territory, CPAWS-BC will continue to offer any assistance we can. We have confidence that this First Nation is committed to caring for nature.

## New Nova Scotia protection

Nova Scotia has a new protected area. The Chignecto Isthmus Wilderness Area was designated by the provincial government last December on lands owned by the Town of Amherst. CPAWS Nova Scotia helped bring together staff from the Municipality with staff from the Protected Areas Branch of Nova Scotia Environment to talk about various conservation options for these lands. The protected wilderness area covers 900 hectares of land right at the Nova Scotia—New Brunswick border, a location critical for conservation and very much threatened by development. Congratulations to the residents of Amherst for their progressive, environmental leadership.

## Explorers Club honours Wayne Sawchuk, CPAWS board member

The illustrious Explorers Club has adopted a new Fellow, a long-time board member and supporter of CPAWS.

Wayne Sawchuk, conservationist, guide, author and photographer, joins such luminaries as Sir Edmond Hillary and Tensinz Norquay, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins, Robert Peary, Roald Amundsen and Thor Heyerdahl, great explorers whose names live in history.

Wayne, who lives on a farm near Rolla, BC, with his partner, poet Donna Kane, a border collie and a herd of horses, is a lifelong resident of northern British Columbia. He has worked as a logger, sawmill worker, wilderness guide, trapper, and conservationist. His photographs have been widely published and collected, and he is the author of *Muskwa-Kechika*, *The Wild Heart of Canada's Northern Rockies*.

The Explorers Club was founded in New York City in 1904, to promote the scientific exploration of land, sea, air, and space by supporting research and education in the natural sciences.



For decades, Wayne has explored the wilderness of Canada's Northern Rockies, leading parties of scientists and artists by horseback into remote areas on research and art expeditions. Governor General Award winning author, John Vaillant, contributed a feature article about Wayne

and his work in the M-K to the November 2008 issue of National Geographic.

Wayne continues to lead expeditions in the summer and travels widely speaking about his conservation work.

## CPAWS New Brunswick's Roberta Clowater joins Premier's roundtable



Roberta Clowater, Executive Director and founder of CPAWS New Brunswick, has been selected to sit on the province's new Round Table on Self-Sufficiency.

The committee of 35 noted individuals from around the province, appointed by Premier Shawn Graham, met for the first time on March 11, 2009.

The purpose of the Round Table is to "define objectives and strategies; and to help align the efforts of government with those individuals and organizations working to make New Brunswick stronger and more prosperous."

Roberta has worked for the past sixteen years in leadership roles for non-government conservation organizations in New Brunswick. She is Chair of the NB government's Protected Natural Areas Provincial Advisory Committee, a Board member for the international Two Countries, One Forest network, and a recent member of the Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply.

LEFT: Roberta spearheaded a campaign to protect northern New Brunswick's Restigouche River.

# Chris Henschel, **CLIMATE CHANGE SECRET AGENT**



You can reach Chris Henschel at extension 220 at the CPAWS office in Ottawa, but this might as well be his special agent number as he attends UN Climate Change Negotiations. Chris is working on behalf of CPAWS with environmental groups and governments from around the world to ensure that measures to protect the earth's wilderness

are part of a new global climate change agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I guess it's kind of silly that I have a little blue United Nations flag on the side of my desk, next to a teapot and a bottle of juice. My corner of the CPAWS office doesn't seem very glamorous, but when I head off to a United Nations Climate Change Conference, my breast always swells a bit with excitement and anticipation.

Most of the work gets done in informal sessions. This is where the world of the special agent comes in: confidential documents, 'deep throat' sources, and backroom meetings rule my days. Meetings between environmental groups and individual countries are among the most effective ways to influence the negotiations, since official proposals can only be put forward by countries.

By the time you read this, I will have returned from the first 2009 negotiating session in Bonn, Germany that took place in March. A number of countries have expressed great interest in the submission that I coordinated for the International Climate Action Network recommending measures for wilderness conservation under the new global climate change agreement. "

Negotiations on a new global climate change agreement wrap up this December in Copenhagen, Denmark. For updates, please visit Chris's blog at: [climateforests.blogspot.com](http://climateforests.blogspot.com)

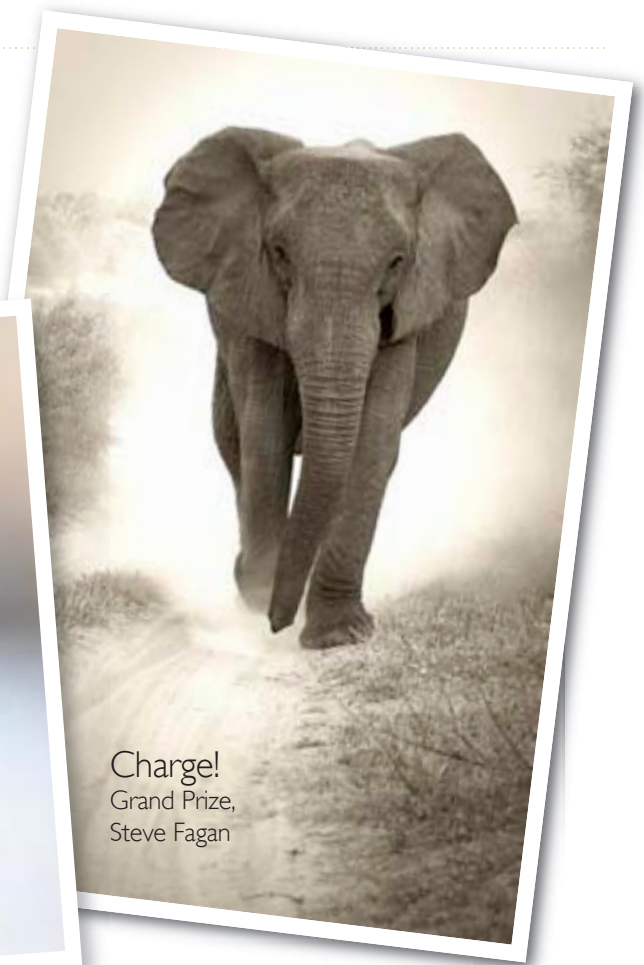
## Photo contest winners

CPAWS Southern Alberta presents the winners of its 10th annual wilderness photography contest, *Capture The Wild*.

Visit [www.cpaws-southernalberta.org](http://www.cpaws-southernalberta.org) to view all the winning photographs.



Flight  
1st Place Canadian Wildlife  
Brian Wolitski



Charge!  
Grand Prize,  
Steve Fagan

# A BIG WILD FAMILY CHALLENGE

To support wilderness protection in Canada, Dave and Karen took their two boys, age 7 and 10, on a week-long kayaking trip on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island.

The boys and I all paddled together in a double kayak. I took the stern, Sam was in the bow, and Zak paddled from the middle hatch. Karen had a single boat, packed full of gear. We paddled past seals and black bears watching us from the shore, and at one point we bobbed around Kyuquot Sound with about 30 sea otters.

It didn't take long for the boys to get into the spirit of wilderness camping. They packed and unloaded the boats, and were willing – almost keen – to help with food prep and dishes. The two of them built windbreaks and forts out of driftwood, and found some rope that made a really cool rope swing on the beach.

The kids even started noticing the amount of plastic bottles that get washed up at the high-tide line, some from as far away as China and Japan. They took it upon themselves to collect all the old plastic and tin they could, then we squashed and crushed it all to fit into our storage hatches. By the time we started back home, we had a mountain of recycling strapped to the deck.

There are definitely challenges when you take your children into remote wilderness. We learned a few things this time, like limiting paddling to about two hours at a stretch, and getting the kids out to explore and take breaks. We try to view things through their eyes, and not sweat the small stuff. It takes a bit of planning and a sense of humour, but it's a thrill to share an adventure like this as a family.

— Dave, Karen, Sam, and Zak

The Big Wild was founded by Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS).



## Take part in a Big Wild Challenge

This trip was chosen as the family challenge winner for the season. Each member took home MEC gear as a prize. Your family can plan their own break from urban life – even if it only lasts a day – and dedicate the adventure to wilderness protection. To find out more, visit [thebigwild.org/challenge](http://thebigwild.org/challenge).

[thebigwild.org](http://thebigwild.org)