

Canadian

WILDERNESS

A publication of CPAWS • Spring / Summer 2015

get close to

nature

SPECIAL
ECO-TOURISM
ISSUE



 **CPAWS**
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Thank you for fueling our passion!

OLIVER KENT

I've been going through family photo albums from the pre-digital era, pulling out photos to be scanned and shared. They take me back to the first great wilderness adventure I shared with my daughter Robin 20 years ago – a canoe trip down the Nahanni. There are pictures not just of the extraordinary scenery, but of us paddling together, rafting up with other canoes on a sunny afternoon, and hiking the surrounding hills. There's even one of us running into the icy cold river for the world's shortest swim.

I had led canoe trips myself as a camp counsellor years earlier, but I was now a busy professional. We needed someone else to look after planning, equipment, food, logistics and navigation. And we needed people to share the experience with.

Somebody must get rich out of eco or adventure tourism, but I haven't met them yet. People guide outdoor adventures because they love to be outside and to share the experience with newcomers.

Henry and Lana Madsen, who were our guides on that first trip, are still leading trips for Nahanni River Adventures two decades later. And they understand the larger significance of what they are doing. In Henry's words, "Eco /Adventure tourism is one of our most promising strategies for sensitizing our society to what we need to protect."

Ecotourism introduces us not just to nature in general, but to specific sites in need of protection. Would I be as passionate about protecting the Nahanni, the Peel River watershed, Gros Morne, or the belugas of the St. Lawrence if there hadn't been people eager to show them to me? CPAWS' eco-tourism partners help make sure that people have the opportunity to visit the next generation of sites in need of protection.

Oliver Kent is CPAWS' National Board President



Oliver Kent (second from right) and daughter Robin (third from right) with Nahanni River Adventures, Snake River, Yukon, 1996.
Photo: Patrick Morrow



CPAWS is Canada's voice for wilderness. Since 1963, we've played a lead role in creating over two-thirds of Canada's protected areas.

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ISSN 1717-8894. Postmaster:
send Canadian address changes
to CPAWS, 506-250 City Centre Ave,
Ottawa, ON K1R 6K7.

Canadian Wilderness is published
twice per year (Spring, Fall) by
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
(charity #10686 5272 RR0001).

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Hope grows for Newfoundland's caribou

Once abundant, the island of Newfoundland's caribou population has suffered steep declines, to the point where it was recently listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as being of "special concern."

CPAWS and others have been urging the province to protect more of Newfoundland's large intact wilderness, absolutely vital to the long-term health of the caribou population. A 10-year provincial forest management strategy released late last year does just that. Under the strategy, the province has declared four million hectares of land, or 35% of the island, off-limits to industrial-scale forestry.

"What's exciting about this announcement is the sheer scale of the conservation zone – in line with the emerging concept of *Nature Needs Half*," says Chris Miller, CPAWS National Conservation Biologist. The large intact landscape deferral runs along the south coast of Newfoundland for almost 500 kilometres, and then inland toward the Northern Peninsula, capturing about three quarters of the best-remaining caribou habitat on the island.

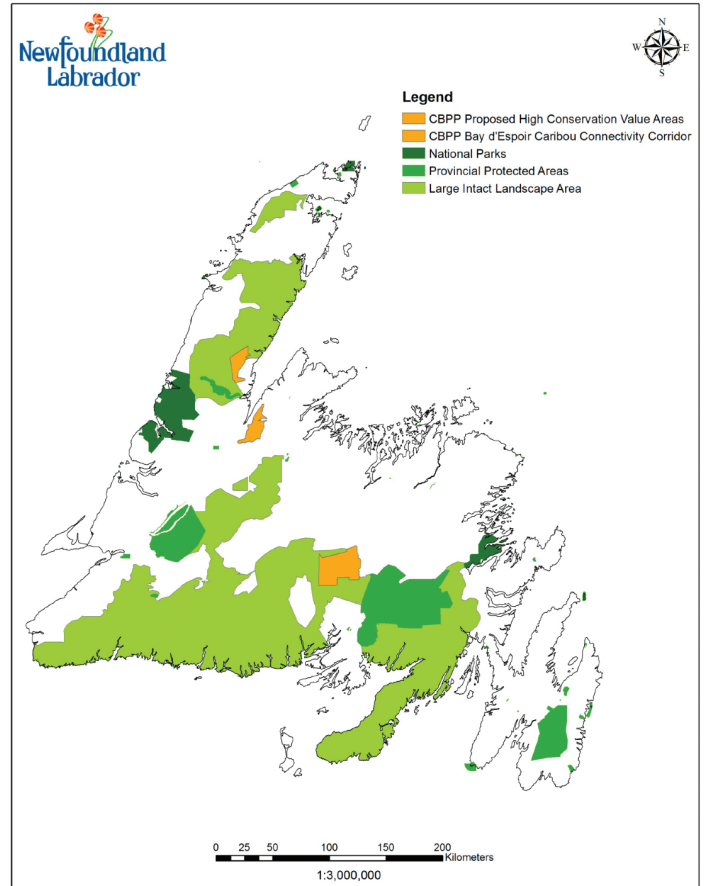
"One might presume that the forest industry in Newfoundland would be opposed to such a large conservation zone. Well, that doesn't appear to be the case. In fact, the biggest mill operating on the island, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd., supports the large intact landscape deferral as part of its FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and actually contributed several important pieces of its own forestry lease towards the effort.

"This is win-win for the environment and forestry," says Miller. "It provides a good starting point for undertaking more comprehensive landscape-level analyses."

For the latest campaign updates, visit caribouandyou.ca



Photo: Gary Gulash



Courtesy Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources

Going to court for Ontario's

When Ontario's new Endangered Species Act (ESA) became law in 2008, CPAWS Wildlands League – which had tirelessly promoted its passage – applauded it as the gold standard in North America. But just five short years later, the province introduced sweeping exemptions under the law for major industries. In our view, this placed endangered species in nearly as much jeopardy as they were before the Act was passed.

So earlier this year, CPAWS Wildlands League and Ontario Nature, represented by Ecojustice lawyers, headed to court to argue that Ontario acted unlawfully by introducing a regulation that undermines the ESA. A panel of three judges at Osgoode Hall heard our case in January. At press time, the justices were still deliberating.

Our concern is that this new Ontario regulation allows major industries including forestry, energy transmission,



Wind River Photo: Peter Mather

Yukon Peel Watershed fight continues

Late in the day on December 30th, 2014, the Yukon government announced it would appeal a court ruling just weeks earlier that upheld the original process for creating the Peel Watershed Land Use Plan. The land use plan under dispute, arrived at after seven years of study and supported by CPAWS and local First Nations, recommended protecting 80% of the watershed – about 54,000 square kilometres – from industrial development.

When the Yukon government threw the recommended plan out and introduced its own in 2014, CPAWS and our partners, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and

the Yukon Conservation Society, represented by the renowned Thomas R. Berger, O.C., Q.C., took the government to court last summer, and won a decisive victory.

Now we are girding our loins for the next phase in court as we await the Yukon government's written arguments for its appeal. It is never CPAWS' preference to fight for conservation gains in the courts, but when years of good faith planning and Indigenous rights are ignored, we don't give up. We give thanks to many generous donors who are enabling us to continue the battle to protect the Peel watershed – truly one of the most spectacular, wild places left on the planet.


endangered species

housing, oil and gas pipeline and mineral exploration companies to avoid strict standards intended to protect at-risk species and their habitats. The exemptions threaten the future for over 150 at-risk species including the American Eel, Blanding's Turtle, Acadian Flycatcher and the iconic Woodland Caribou.

CPAWS Wildlands League is asking Ontario to withdraw this regulation and protect our wildlife by enforcing the Endangered Species Act as intended. That means putting plans in place that will prevent industrial development, resource extraction or other activities from wiping out vulnerable species.



Blanding Turtle
Photo: Don Henise



DOING IT FOR THE LOVE OF

This issue of *Canadian Wilderness* profiles a few of the great eco-tourism operators who've dedicated significant time and effort to CPAWS' wilderness conservation campaigns over the years.

NATURE

From BC logger to eco-guide, meet Wayne Sawchuk



Wayne Sawchuk, left; Packstring on Shoulder Mountain, above Mayfield Lake and the Gataga River.
Photos: Wayne Sawchuk

Every summer for the past 20 years, Wayne Sawchuk has headed out on horseback into the “wildest part of the Rockies” west of Chetwynd, British Columbia, on a three-month, 300-mile expedition into the extraordinarily beautiful Muskwa-Kechika wilderness area. Paying guests join him and his pack of 20 or so horses at intervals along the trail.

“To my knowledge, no one else covers so many miles of wilderness trails. The trips are one to two weeks long, giving a much deeper experience than is typical for trail rides. Our trips are experiential as well, with all riders participating fully in camp duties and chores like saddling and unsaddling, cooking and packing up,” says the handle-bar mustachioed Sawchuk, age 59, of his adventure tourism enterprise.

When he was a young logging contractor in the 80s, in the off-seasons Sawchuk gathered up horses and friends, heading for the Rocky Mountains and boreal forests in his backyard.

“I needed that respite with nature. And what a glorious, adventurous time it was!”

Although he enjoyed working in the bush, he began to experience a fundamental shift in values in early adulthood.

“I couldn’t escape the jarring contrast between the scarred and roaded industrial landscapes where my family worked, and the wildlife-rich, pristine wilderness I visited in the all-too-short northern summers,” he writes on his website. His off-season expeditions became more frequent and lasted longer each year.

In the late 1980s, Wayne sold his interest in the family company, leaping at the chance to purchase his uncle Norman’s wilderness trapline on the Gataga River in the Northern Rockies.

From there, Sawchuk’s conservation-first approach to his life took over. And his innate talents as a storyteller and photographer also flourished.

Sawchuk has not only has guided people on horseback through the mountains of Muskwa-Kechika, he has dedicated thousands of hours since the early 1990s to gaining protection for northern British Columbia’s remaining intact watersheds. He was a founder of the Chetwynd Environmental Society to save nearby Mountain Creek Valley, and then moved into two decades of work with CPAWS in both paid and unpaid positions to protect BC’s northern Rockies.

“My business started as a way to introduce people to the beauty and natural wonder of BC’s northern Rockies. At first it was all non-profit. Then as the campaign (to protect the 6.4 million hectare Muskwa-Kechika) wound down, I continued the expeditions on a more for-fee basis,” says Sawchuk.

He continues to work part-time as a conservationist in northern BC, saving the summers for the guided expeditions. During the other nine months he lives with wife, poet Donna Kane, two cats and “21 hooved friends” on a farm acreage near Rolla, in the province’s northeast.

His advice to young folks interested in starting an adventure tourism business today?

“Go for it. Don’t expect to get rich, but enjoy a lifestyle with unmatched freedom, and, if based on a solid conservation foundation, one that will be a source of excitement, happiness, and pride,” says Sawchuk.

Find out more about giddyng up with Wayne Sawchuk in the northern Rockies at www.go2mk.ca

Jill Pangman offers Yukon wilderness experiences with soul

Jill Pangman has been passionate about being outdoors for as long as she can remember. She's also passionate about protecting it.

"I've witnessed how meaningful and transformative the trips I offer have been for participants. This has reaffirmed just how important it is to save wilderness, not just for the sake of wildlife and habitat preservation, but also for the well-being of peoples' psyches," says Pangman.

The energetic, 60-year-old Pangman is sole proprietor of Sila Sojourns in the Yukon Territory, running her business from a timber frame house not far from Whitehorse. She grew up in southern Ontario and Quebec, and after graduating with a degree in wildlife Biology, she spent years exploring ecosystems around the world before settling in the Canadian north. She started guiding river and hiking trips in the Yukon in 1989, and founded her business in 1992 with a partner. For the past decade, she has kept the business at a level where she can guide all the trips herself.

"I feel like my 'calling' is to be out in wild places with people, helping to facilitate meaningful wilderness experiences," says Pangman.

Her first full summer job was working for Waterton Lakes Park-based nature photographer/writer Andy Russell, photographing nature on extended hiking trips in the Rockies.

"It was very influential summer from the perspective of developing passion for wild places and for mountains, and being inspired by being in the presence of such an incredible conservationist," says Pangman.

"My journeys often offer more than an adventure with a natural history educational theme. Some of them include other activities that allow the participant to experience the wilderness in a deeper way, including through yoga, singing, photography, meditation, writing and poetry. Some of the journeys are for women only – offering them the type of experience that they find very nurturing and rejuvenating."

Pangman's love of wilderness also translates into countless hours of volunteer work. She has served as CPAWS' Yukon chapter president for close to a decade, focusing on a campaign to protect the Peel watershed. "We are blessed to still have vast tracts of wild land and free flowing waters in the Yukon. I feel that this wilderness is our most valuable resource, and the greatest gift we can offer to the world. Yet we will lose it if we are not vigilant in our efforts to protect it," says Pangman.

Pangman is also vice president of the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, and has been on the board for most of its 20+-year history.

According to Pangman, "The reason I have stayed on for this long is to ensure that the organization, which represents an industry that is one of the Territory's main economic drivers, continues to have a conservation voice, not solely an economic one."

Find out more about Sila Sojourns trips at www.silasojourns.com or write to info@silasojourns.com



Connecting people
to the majestic Yukon.
Photo: Sila Sojourns

Neil Hartling spreads the love for Nahanni

Neil Hartling first became enamored with the Nahanni after reading a book about it when he was 15, growing up in Alberta. Little did he know that he would grow up to live his dream of guiding expeditions across “the top of the world”.

After graduating with an outdoor education degree and running an outdoor skills school and canoe factory out of his parent’s garage, he found himself on a three-week trip on the Nahanni River. It was love at first sight. After rescuing a First Nations family on the Liard River, the village supported him in his bid for the last remaining outfitting license and he hasn’t looked back since.

As the Whitehorse-based owner of Canadian River Expeditions & Nahanni River Adventures, Hartling knows that guests are looking for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. His company offers multi-day river journeys on over 20 iconic northern rivers, from Alaska to the eastern arctic, as well as winter tropical trips to Baja, Belize and Galapagos.

Since 1985, he and his staff have guided over 10,000 paddlers downriver. Guests’ experiences go beyond just an adventure activity to learning about and experiencing the natural history and culture of their destination. “Guests may only travel a specific river once, so it’s up to us to make sure we “do it right”, says Hartling.

“Words like average and good enough just aren’t in our vocabulary. We pay attention to the special details and always go the extra mile,” he adds.

Hartling has also generously contributed both time and money to wilderness conservation. He has participated in CPAWS’ campaigns to expand Nahanni National Park Reserve, protect

the Yukon’s Peel watershed, and three decades ago, to create northern British Columbia’s Tatshenshini Alsek Wilderness Park. His contributions have ranged from lively presentations during a cross-Canada tour in 2006 to promote the Nahanni park expansion, and free rafting trips with his company down the South Nahanni River for lucky event prize winners over the years.

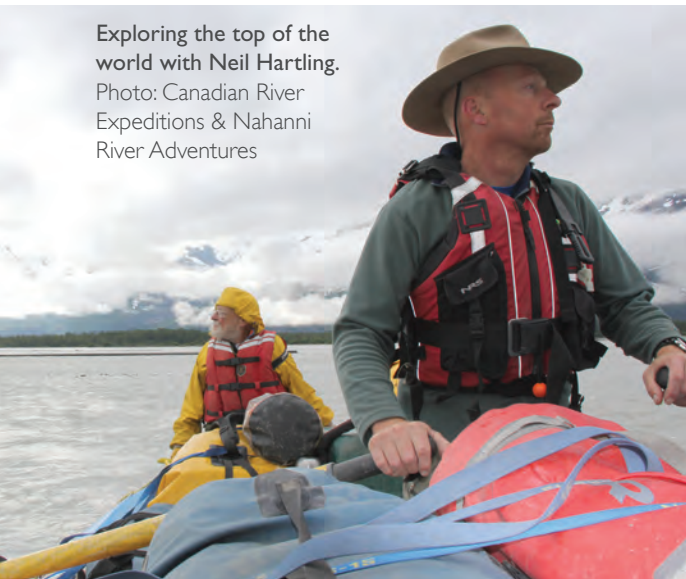
Conservation has been part of Hartling’s DNA since founding his company over 30 years ago. His outfit embraces conservation and sustainable tourism practices, leading in the Leave No Trace principles of outdoor ethics and promoting protection of the wilderness they visit.

For Hartling, each trip his company guides is a conservation mission. “People protect what they love, so my job is to create emissaries by bringing them to some of the most beautiful places in this world and creating an experience they will never forget. Most of the north is protected by default. As time passes, we are learning of more environmental challenges, here in Canada and around the world. We all have to do what we can to protect these precious places,” he says of his personal reasons for dedicating effort to conservation.

Hartling could give you a long list of reasons why you should add a northern adventure to your bucket list, but he also warns, “The lure of the ‘magnetic north’ will have you coming back, year after year. The diversity of this part of Canada is so beautiful and captivating that the greatest danger for you is becoming as hopelessly addicted to this larger-than-life land as I am.”

To learn more about exploring the top of the world, visit www.nahanni.com

Exploring the top of the world with Neil Hartling.
Photo: Canadian River Expeditions & Nahanni River Adventures



Alpine Camp Balogna Creek Headwaters
Photo: Mike Beedell



See Prince Albert National Park from the back of a horse.
 Photos: Corbin Fraser/backpackcanada.com (above);
 Sturgeon River Ranch (right)

Gord Vaadeland invites you home on the range

Being out in nature has always been part of Gord Vaadeland's life, and he wouldn't have it any other way. Gord was born, raised and still lives on his family ranch on the southwest boundary of Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan. His ranching home life and time spent on his grandfather's trap line as a kid led Gord to develop a real love for wildlife, the outdoors and "roughing it".

Vaadeland opened his ranch to guests in 2007. "I had always had the dream of sharing this beautiful area and lifestyle with guests. Most of what I do with guests are the same things that I grew up doing with my family and continue to do every day. In fact, many of our trips are guided by myself, my 81-year old Dad, and my 11-year old son. It doesn't get much better than that!"

Sturgeon River Ranch provides guests with the opportunity to experience Saskatchewan's Prince Albert National Park "as it was meant to be experienced – from the back of a horse," he says. Vacations of two to five days introduce guests to Canada's only wild free ranging plains bison herd still within their historic range, rare fescue grass islands surrounded by lush forests, and, above all, an authentic ranch experience.

"My goal is to provide my guests with a once-in-a-lifetime experience living something they have always dreamt about. I want to help them experience wildlife as it was meant to be experienced, like bison that are wild enough to run away and make you work to see them."

Each trip serves as an introduction to and reinforcement of the importance of conserving natural areas and threatened species. "We need healthy protected areas to help ensure

healthy wildlife and ecosystems that we can showcase to our guests. We're privileged to have a national park out our back door, so we try to use our offerings to help guests understand the importance of protecting our wild spaces and wildlife and to take that message home with them," adds Vaadeland.

As a rancher, Vaadeland's lifestyle has always gone hand in hand with conservation. He knows that ensuring healthy water and lands is the cornerstone of healthy livestock and profits. In 2005, he founded the Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards – a group focused on creating an environment where wild bison can co-exist with local ranchers in a way that is mutually beneficial. In 2007, Vaadeland became executive director of CPAWS' Saskatchewan chapter. Wearing his CPAWS hat, he focuses on conserving caribou, the Boreal forest, grasslands and bison – both locally and internationally as part of IUCN's Bison Specialist Group.

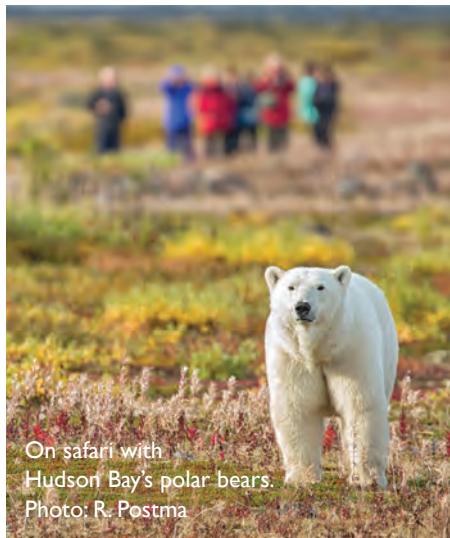
His advice to those thinking about their future? "Try to do something you love and then work hard. There is no better feeling than being able to stand behind everything you do and be proud and happy with what you are accomplishing and know that you haven't compromised the things you value most. I'm proud to be able to do this on my ranch and in my CPAWS role. In the end, it's not about me or us. It's about all the awesome places in Canada that are worth protecting for the future."

Learn more about visiting Sturgeon River Ranch at www.sturgeonriverranch.com or find them on Facebook (www.facebook.com/sturgeonriverranch) and Twitter (@RanchAdventures).

Getting close to Manitoba's polar bears

Does walking the tundra with polar bears and snorkeling Hudson Bay with wild belugas seem like a fantasy? With over 100 combined years of Arctic travel experience, Mike and Jeanne Reimer and their family have made some of the world's most unique and breathtaking wilderness experiences available to the adventurous at heart. Operating out of three isolated eco-lodges in northern Manitoba, their company, **Churchill Wild**, treads softly on the land while inspiring lasting connections with the natural world.

For three years, Churchill Wild has also supported CPAWS' efforts to connect Manitobans to the province's landscapes by sponsoring educational outreach publications that showcase our campaign areas. As a tour operator and stakeholder in the Hudson Bay region, Churchill Wild has provided insight into how protected



On safari with Hudson Bay's polar bears.
Photo: R. Postma

areas might be executed in order to support local, sustainable economic opportunities for businesses in that region.

- Joshua Perlman, CPAWS Manitoba
For more information, visit www.churchillwild.com

Nahanni operators band together for conservation

Since 2005, **Black Feather, Nahanni Wilderness Adventures** and **Nahanni River Adventures** – three guiding companies operating on the mighty South Nahanni River inside Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserves – have been operating the Nahanni River Fund in partnership with CPAWS. The tour operators gather contributions to the fund from clients who join them on their Nahanni river trips. Our shared goal for the fund is to enable river trip participants to contribute toward projects that support conservation education, protection and advocacy both within the park reserves and the greater South Nahanni River Watershed.

In the past contributions from the fund have helped CPAWS to prepare education and outreach materials about important scientific research done in the South Nahanni Watershed. This includes material that helped us and the Dehcho First Nations to make a persuasive case for gaining a nearly seven-fold expansion of the park reserve in 2009.

The fund also enables CPAWS' NWT chapter to provide annual updates to river guides and clients about the ecology and ongoing industrial activities in the watershed. It is a valuable means to keep these outfitter's river clients – often the strongest advocates for the Nahanni – connected with a place they love, and aware of opportunities to protect its future.

- Kris Brekke, CPAWS Northwest Territories



Photo: Adam Smith

Northern Ontario outfitters ... and more



Photo: Lynne and Bernie Cox

Over the years, Lynn and Bernie Cox have helped CPAWS Wildlands League introduce many people to Ontario's Far North and the issues facing the largest chunk of intact forest left on the planet. Every year we have pulled off an epic trip on a wilderness river, where rapids can crush canoes and weather can strand you for days, it has largely been thanks to the expertise and guidance of Lynn and Bernie.

For many years, Lynn and Bernie ran North Star Air and Canoe Frontiers, an eco-tourism operation in Pickle Lake providing adventure across Ontario's Far North and exposure to the wonders of Ontario's northern boreal forest. These days, they focus on running **Lakeview Manor Bed and Breakfast**, but still dabble in outfitting the northern paddler. From accommodation and logistical support to northern gourmet fare, extra equipment and instruction, Lynn and Bernie ensure we have the best experience possible.

Beyond outfitting, the Coxes bring together strands of development, recreation and conservation to help weave the fabric of community in the Far North. One example is Lynn's long tenure on the Ontario Parks Board, providing advice on the province's protected areas to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

- Dave Pearce, CPAWS Wildlands League

GET UP CLOSE WITH COASTAL BC'S MAJESTIC ORCAS

With a decade of experience running whale watching and eco-adventure tours, Ian Gidney has immense knowledge and respect for the wildlife inhabitants of British Columbia's Gulf Islands.

His small but popular operation, **Outdoor Visions Tours**, runs the only open 12-passenger Zodiac tours around the Salt Spring Island area. Ian takes visitors on an informative journey to see orcas, bald eagles, harbour seals and other coastal wildlife amidst beautiful scenery, while teaching them how their own actions can impact the ocean.

"We really try to incorporate as much regional conservation information as we can for our customers on each tour. Most importantly, we educate [them]

that the whales and marine mammals they are observing are endangered and need protection," said Ian.

Ian generously donates trips and time to aid in fundraising, research, and obtaining footage and photography of marine life up close through his support of environmental groups like CPAWS and the Salt Spring Conservancy.

-Michelle Sz, CPAWS British Columbia
For more information, visit gulf-islands-safari.blogspot.ca

Orcas in British Columbia's Gulf Islands.
Photo: Outdoor-Visions

Rocky mountain lodge shows conservation spirit

Aurum Lodge is an award-winning eco-tourism country inn located in Alberta's Rocky Mountains. Overlooking Abraham Lake, this full-season lodge is an ideal wilderness retreat for exploring Banff and Jasper National Parks.

An Aurum Lodge experience includes pristine wilderness, environmental values and low impact recreation, and lodge operations that are driven by environmental responsibility and conservation standards. CPAWS' Southern Alberta chapter thanks Aurum Lodge for supporting our conservation work and being a great example of a sustainable green eco-tourism destination that promotes wilderness and stewardship values.

-Anne-Marie Syslak, CPAWS Southern Alberta
For more information, visit www.aurumlodge.com

Paddle New Brunswick's Restigouche

If you've ever been canoeing on the Restigouche River, you may already know **Arpin Canoe Restigouche** and André Arpin—one of the most dedicated eco-tourism operators in New Brunswick. André, his daughter, Marie-Christine, and their small team of guides run Arpin Canoe Restigouche on the banks of the storied Restigouche River.

During a partnership of 15 years, Arpin Canoe Restigouche and CPAWS New Brunswick have developed the Friends of Restigouche network and Keep the Restigouche Wild campaign to encourage increased conservation of Restigouche's rivers and wilderness areas. Other community groups and individuals have joined along the way.

André's determination to protect the natural environment on and around the Restigouche and its tributaries is infectious and inspiring. We've attracted over 12,000 voices in support of protecting Restigouche wilderness, thanks in good part to his eagerness to engage customers to help protect the wilderness they love.

-Roberta Clowater, CPAWS New Brunswick
For more information, visit www.canoerestigouche.ca

Photo: Pierre Pepin/Les Amis du Mushuau-nipi

Welcome to the land of the Innu

You've likely never heard of **Mushuau-nipi**. It is a company created in Quebec over a decade ago, to provide people the world over with an introduction to the traditional territory of the Innu.

Meaning "land without trees" in Innu, *Mushuau-nipi* is located about 250 km from Schefferville, on the tundra that forms part of the migratory path of the George River caribou herd. This area, inhabited for 6,000 years, is the cultural heart of the Innu Nation.

During a six to nine day stay at *Mushuau-nipi*, visitors from the world over can experience daily life in an Indigenous camp alongside community members, with activities including tipi construction, fishing and other outings.

The *Mushuau-nipi* Corporation has also developed social programs. One of the most notable is a program called "Initiatives Jeunesse" which offers Quebecois and First Nations youth the opportunity to spend a week at the camp during the summer, exploring issues such as their identity, ways that cultures can live together, and sustainable development. CPAWS Quebec has been involved in this program since last August.

-Murielle Renard, CPAWS Quebec



On the river with Arpin Canoe Restigouche. Photo: John MacDermid

NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEER... except for maybe Jim Willet

Last September, ultra marathon runner and MEC envoy Jim Willet did a truly remarkable thing. He set out to beat the record for the fastest time in running the entire Bruce Trail – Canada's oldest and longest foot trail. And, he did it all in the name of conservation, dedicating his marathon to CPAWS' fundraising event, the **MEC Big Wild Challenge**.

The Bruce Trail cuts across southern Ontario, running from Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula to the Niagara River, along the Niagara Escarpment. Jim, who is also a cancer survivor, completed the 885 km trek in just 10 days, 13 hours and 57 minutes ... smashing the previous record by nearly 2 full days! Jim's run is a shining example of Canadians getting outside to help nature.



The **MEC Big Wild Challenge** is back this year and we invite you to participate in this great fundraising event by designing YOUR own challenge. You don't have to break any records. You might paddle

that lake you've always had in mind to do, or take a friend out for their very first hike. The goal is simple. Get outside and help protect the places we love. See you on the trail!

Jim Willet's blog:
<http://runjimmirun.blogspot.ca/>
About the event:
www.bigwildchallenge.org

MEC **BIG WILD**
CHALLENGE

● CPAWS TRACKS ACROSS CANADA

Newfoundland tourism operators help baby puffins



Photo: Paul Regular

The Witless Bay Ecological Reserve is home to the largest Atlantic Puffin colony in North America. With 260,000 pairs, it's also home to the second largest colony of Leach's Storm Petrels in the world. Since the puffin and petrel patrol began, when environmental conditions were not favorable for beach releases, local eco-tourism entrepreneurs have been helping us out by releasing stranded juvenile pufflings at sea.

Our eco-tourism partners provide education to all of their customers on the need for protection of our marine life. And we are also very grateful to them for providing volunteers of the puffin patrol program with a unique boat ride at the end of the season. Tourism operators throughout the region are key to the local tourism industry, and all of them provide a unique personal experience to their patrons.

- Suzanne Dooley and Tanya Edwards, CPAWS Newfoundland and Labrador



Connecting youth to Alberta's wilderness

Equipped with a fleet of canoes and a truck full of paddles and PFDs, staff from **HeLa Ventures** made the trek to Elk Island National Park this past summer to help out with CPAWS Northern Alberta's Big Wild Challenge. Thanks to HeLa, almost 80 participants had the opportunity to hop in a canoe and paddle around an island as part of CPAWS' challenge to get people outside.

HeLa Ventures owners Henry and Lana Madsen have dedicated their lives to connecting Alberta's youth with nature. They believe that in order to understand the need for wilderness protection, one must get out and experience nature.

Nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains alongside the North Saskatchewan River, HeLa Ventures is the perfect home base for an Outdoor Adventure education centre. From river canoeing and white water rafting to rock climbing and mountain biking, HeLa introduces hundreds of youth each year to the stunning beauty that Alberta's foothills have to offer.

- Alison Ronson, CPAWS Northern Alberta
For more information, visit helaventures.com

legacy gifts

Remembering Aileen Harmon, 1912-2015

Aileen Harmon, one of CPAWS' first Rocky Mountain conservation activists, passed away this year at Mill Bay, British Columbia, after a long and rich life.

Aileen's passion for preserving Canada's national parks was as big as her heart. Aileen left a significant gift to CPAWS in her will. She was a dedicated conservationist who wanted to make sure that future generations would be able to experience the beauty of our national parks the way she did. Conservationists and acquaintances far and wide have told her family how incredibly touched and inspired they were by her courage and generosity of spirit.

As a dedicated volunteer, Aileen helped several environmental organizations get off the ground. She co-founded



the Calgary-Banff Chapter of NPPAC (now CPAWS Southern Alberta) and Bow Valley Naturalists, and was by all accounts an outstanding trustee and director of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists and Canadian Wildlife Federation. Over the years, she tackled major planning and development issues. One of her greatest triumphs was stopping development of an alpine resort community on Mount Whitehorn at Lake Louise in Banff National Park.

Aileen loved to travel and experience

new things. She rafted wild rivers in Ethiopia, hiked her way around Nepal, and studied cultures in New Guinea and the Andes. She enjoyed photography, writing and art. Throughout her working career, she developed, taught, designed and wrote about park interpretation. She was one of the pioneers in this field within Parks Canada. After retiring as a Parks Naturalist with Parks Canada, Aileen moved to Mill Bay where her home became known as "Harmon's National Park." Friends, family and the people who crossed her path will long remember Harmon's National Park and the inspirational woman who welcomed them there.

Bequests like Aileen's help make things happen on the ground for the conservation of wilderness protection.

If you'd like to leave a gift to CPAWS in your will, please contact Vicki DiMillo, CPAWS Donor Relations Manager, at 1-800-333-WILD (9483) or vdimillo@cpaws.org.

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2015 AGM NOTICE

The CPAWS Annual General Meeting
will be held by conference call on
Monday, September 28th,
at 8:00 pm Eastern.

For more information,
please contact us at
info@cpaws.org
or 1-800-333-9453


CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY



Good times. Great cause.

MEC **BIG WILD**
CHALLENGE

Trail running fundraiser for CPAWS

On September 19, MEC and CPAWS are hosting the Big Wild Challenge in cities across Canada. These trail running events will raise funds to protect at-risk wilderness, and MEC is matching all donations up to \$20,000. Round up your running crew, and see you there!

Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal

Sign up or donate at www.bigwildchallenge.org