

Elders Council for Parks

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

ELDERS COUNCIL PRESENTS MINISTER WITH 10-POINT VISION FOR PARKS SYSTEM



Following the Dunsmuir Conference in June 2006, the Elders Council reviewed the session results and arrived at ten key principles that were presented to the Minister of Environment.

We envisage a parks system:

- 1** with a bold new management model designed to engage all British Columbians in supporting their parks system. The government has gone it alone for too long.
- 2** that is enjoyed by all British Columbians through the provision of more accessible recreation and educational opportunities and is located appropriately within a well planned system and in adjacent lands and gateway communities.
- 3** where all governments continue to provide the legal and policy framework for parks, make ecological protection their priority, and resource it accordingly.
- 4** that reaches out to other parks systems and the international community to gain support and to reduce inefficiencies and overlap between park systems.
- 5** that establishes strong new relationships with First Nations.

- 6** that builds on the "natural" in *Supernatural BC* to showcase BC's "green" entrepreneurial expertise and environmental best practices through investments in park infrastructure replacements and other improvements throughout BC.
- 7** that is publicly accountable and performance focused through the development of a world class park-by-park monitoring and reporting regime that provides an annual public view of the state of our parks.
- 8** that attracts visitors from around the world to enjoy a world class experience as a result of new trails, educational packages, senior adventures etc.
- 9** that truly engages local communities and youth in park management support roles through the involvement of schools, local politicians, seniors outreach etc.
- 10** that is ready to welcome visitors to the 2010 Olympics and to attract visitors in 2011 to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our provincial parks system.

HONOURING PARK BUILDERS



Elders Council Park Builders - back row: Bob Ahrens (for Kerry Joy), Bob Williams, Rich Hankin, Milt Goddard, Ken Farquharson, Lucien Campeau (for Ian Leman), Ric Careless, Ed Mankelow, Paul Skydt (for John MacFarlane), Tom Moore (for Dennis Podmore) and Derek Thompson (for Jake Masselink). front row: David Stirling, Suzanne Rose and Denise Velay (for Charlie Velay), Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo, Heather Prittie (for Freeman King), Harold Eidsvik, Ruby Dunstan.

The Elders Council for Parks in BC held a gathering in Penticton on May 27 & 28, 2006 to honour the builders of BC's parks system through the 1960s and 1970s. The Honourable Iona Campagnolo, Lieutenant Governor of BC and Elders Council patron presented the awardees with rainforest vessels created by artist Jason Marlow.

The 16 distinguished members of the Elders Council honoured at the ceremony were: Harold Eidsvik, Bob Williams, Jake Masselink, Charlie Velay, Dennis Podmore, Ian Leman, Milt Goddard, John MacFarlane, Kerry Joy, David Stirling, Freeman King, Rich Hankin, Ken Farquharson, Ric Careless, Ed Mankelow and Ruby Dunstan.

In 2004, the Elders Council previously recognized the pioneers of BC's parks system, including Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, a UBC professor who inspired generations of students, and Dr. Bert Brink, who persuaded the government to legislate a Parks Act and helped establish Tweedsmuir, Wells Gray, Cathedral and Spatsizi provincial parks.

Those honoured as park builders included Harold Eidsvik, one of Canada's original national parks planners who helped establish Pacific Rim National Park and Nahanni National Park. Also honoured was John MacFarlane, one of the founding directors of Interpretation Canada—the professional association

for heritage interpreters—who produced the first national park interpretation plans for western Canada. Ruby Dunstan, the first female Chief of the Lytton First Nation, was honoured for her inspirational leadership of the movement to recognize and protect the wilderness values of the Stein Valley.

The Elders Council posthumously honoured two of the most influential BC park builders of the past 50 years.

Freeman King

Early conservationist, naturalist, and legendary Scout leader Freeman King (photo on p.1) inspired many young Victoria naturalists and was the namesake of Francis/King Regional Park and Freeman King Visitor Center in Goldstream Provincial Park, where he worked as a naturalist. The media reported that when he reached 65, his paycheques stopped arriving but he carried on as a volunteer.

Charlie Velay

Charlie Velay personally recruited and led the teams that developed and managed an enormously expanded provincial parks system and their recreation facilities through the 1960s and 1970s. His personal stamp remains on many of the campgrounds and facilities in parks throughout the province. Charlie's career spanned a period of enormous change and his insight, experience and counsel was sought by all those with whom he worked.

The Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia

Steering Committee

Jim Barlow
John Block
Colin Campbell
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Denis O'Gorman and
Lloyd Manchester for
their work planning
the 2006 Elders Gathering in
Penticton.

TOWARDS A WORLD CLASS PROVINCIAL PARKS SYSTEM FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

Elders Council meets with Budget Consultation Committee

Last fall, the Elders Council made a brief presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. We proposed that BC create and develop a world class management system for BC's Provincial Parks—to be completed by 2010—one year before the 2011 centenary of the establishment of BC's first provincial park.

For British Columbians to realize the potential of our provincial parks system, the government needs to:

- Publicly advance a practical, comprehensive, principled and visionary plan for future stewardship, public recreation services and societal partnerships for this system.
- Put in place within government a re-invigorated, entrepreneurial-based Parks organization that has deep connections with British Columbian society.
- Provide significant new funds (that are targeted to achieve the first two steps and address the vision we are proposing). Then to challenge all parts of society to enter partnerships to contribute more resources and become fully engaged in achieving our collective "Made in BC" world class vision.

In the past fifteen years, our provincial parks system has expanded and is now a world class system. Twice the size it was in 1992, the BC Parks system is treasured for its natural wealth, its landscapes and for its species already lost in many other parts of the world.

British Columbians are proud of this outstanding achievement.

However, our parks system currently lacks the management, governance framework and resources to allow us to capitalize on it as a world class asset and to provide the management and protection necessary to retain the value of its natural, cultural and built assets.

Now is the time to work together to implement a new "Built in BC" vision to make our provincial parks the best managed in the world. This vision requires significant new multi-year investments:

- 1 to develop a new BC Parks organization designed to implement the vision,
- 2 to upgrade and construct new park infrastructure,
- 3 to create and provide better, more exciting recreational and educational programming, and
- 4 to provide trained staff and resources to better preserve and protect all park assets.

A recent economic study of BC Parks suggests that an investment in BC's provincial parks generates a seven-fold return in economic benefits to the province. This is a reasonable return on public investment and we are confident that British Columbians will support new investments in their parks system.

100th anniversary of BC Parks in 2011

2011 will mark the 100th anniversary of BC Parks. The Elders Committee has been working to document the history of the evolution of BC Parks. In addition, a committee of members from the Elders Council is meeting every three months with the Deputy Minister to urge the government to sufficiently commemorate this occasion and to ensure that this celebration is reflected province-wide.



THE PARK FUTURES COMMITTEE

Helping to enable a Sustainable Provincial Parks System

The Elders Council at work

December 05 – The Elders Council makes an offer to MOE

A key strength of the Elders Council is that we draw from members who have numerous years of experience as managers and staff of national, regional and provincial parks and as long-term park advocates.

Early discussions determined that the provincial parks system was in most need of support. As a result, the decision was made to develop an advocacy strategy that was based on “aggressive enabling and support”. The purpose was to see how far we could advance an agenda to help create a sustainable provincial parks system.

We contacted the then newly appointed Minister of the Environment, Barry Penner, and Deputy Minister, Chris Trumpy, and offered to work with them and with the Ministry to build a sustainable provincial parks system by 2011.

January 06 – MEC Joint Committee established

A committee of three Council Members and three representatives from the Ministry of Environment worked for six months to organize the Dunsmuir “Parks Futures Dialogue” Conference in June 2006.

June 06 – The Dunsmuir Conference

Roughly thirty people with a wide variety of experience and a demonstrated interest in parks were challenged during this two day event to discuss the changes needed to create a sustainable provincial parks system. A copy of the conference report has been posted on the Elders Council website.

Conclusions of the Dunsmuir Session were:

- The BC Government needs to adequately invest in the parks system
- The main expansion phase of provincial parks has largely been completed
- There is a need to focus on long-term stewardship of this remarkable world ecological treasure
- New focus must be placed on encouraging more British Columbians to enjoy and appreciate their provincial parks system
- The government must reach out to foster greater community involvement and engage in building lasting partnerships that can benefit parks

- Non-government sectors must now step up to the plate and become fully engaged in supporting the parks system in collaboration with the Government.

Fall 06 – Advocating for Parks funding and a new approach

Following the June 06 Dunsmuir session, the Elders Council made a presentation to the 2007 Special Budget Review Committee to increase funding and to build a world class management system. The Council then met with the Minister of the Environment and emphasised that in order for BC’s provincial parks system to be world class, development of a clear vision, a multi-year strategy with full accountability measures and a celebration of the parks centenary in 2011 is required.

The Minister encouraged the Council to work with MOE officials to achieve these goals.

Spring 07 – Some positive signs of progress from the Government and Ministry

This spring the Council met with Ministry staff and was pleased with a number of developments that occurred over the winter:

- The provincial government has provided some new funds for additional operational support and has made a major investment in turning around the long-term challenge of a deteriorating infrastructure.
- The Environment and Stewardship Division has been re-organised to give parks more profile.
- In March, Victoria successfully hosted a four day conference that involved all parks staff and included a new focus on community engagement.

While we have yet to turn the corner, significant progress has been made and it is very important that we continue to support the momentum that has been generated within the Ministry.

What’s ahead?

Over the next few months, we will be working directly with Ministry staff to develop a practical long-term parks vision, a multi-year strategy for sustainability and special initiatives to celebrate the 2011 centenary of the provincial parks system. We will also be building on the development of a number of initiatives to develop new partnerships and new opportunities

for community involvement along with discussions on how parks can play a strong role in the government's climate change strategy.

Some additional Elder's Council related initiatives

Elders Council Members have been active in stimulating initiatives to complement government-based programs.

Bob Peart is playing a leadership role in developing the new "Child in Nature" initiative that targets the creation of a national movement to encourage the re-engagement of children with nature – to tackle the "nature deficit disorder" that Richard Louv popularised in his book *Last Child in the Woods*.

Colin Campbell, working with John Restakis, Executive Director of the BC Co-operatives Association, is seeking national funds

to test the feasibility of developing a new co-operative – the BC Parklands Co-operative – to engage youth leadership in parks and protected areas and in promotion and stewardship at the community level.

Conclusion

We are making progress. However there is a long way to go to ensure that the provincial parks system will be sustained for the benefit of generations to come. The Elders Council is concerned about creating a bright future for parks as well as celebrating our many accomplishments.

If you have any thoughts about the approaches we are taking, we would love to hear from you.

Colin Campbell
Chair Park Futures Committee

PARK FUTURES MEETING AT DUNSMUIR LODGE

A committee was established to work with BC Parks to host a conference to explore possibilities for designing a sustainable parks delivery system by the year 2011, the 100th anniversary of the Provincial parks system. The purpose was defined as: "to have an open and politically non-partisan dialogue for developing a set of wide-ranging and non-binding ideas on the future of the parks."

Co-hosted by the Elders Council for Parks and the Ministry of Environment, the conference was organized by a committee comprised of: Jim Barlow, Colin Campbell, Ric Careless, and Bob Peart from the Elders Council and Nancy Wilkin, Lynn Kennedy and Scott Benton from the Ministry of Environment.

Conference participants represented a broad spectrum of view points including NGOs, First Nations, the general public, Park

Elders and Ministry Staff. Participants were selected for their extensive knowledge, insight and experience in park planning and management.

Opening the conference, Colin Campbell introduced the Elders Council and described the event as an experiment in collaboration aimed at exploring positive and constructive solutions for a sustainable BC Parks system. Chris Trumpy reinforced that the conference was not necessarily about obtaining consensus. Rather, it was about developing a set of wide-ranging, non-binding ideas.

As a result of this conference, BC Parks' Treasury Board submission was full of excellent and thoughtful parks strategies.



Tetrahedron Peak in Tetrahedron Provincial Park.

ESTABLISHING A PARK HERITAGE CENTRE

The Elders Council has established a five year agreement with BC Parks to use the Mount Seymour Provincial Park Ranger Station in North Vancouver as a heritage centre. The natural setting of the station provides easy access, making it a suitable destination for all Lower Mainland users interested in learning more about the importance of BC Parks.

The establishment of the Parks Heritage Centre will contribute towards the Elders Council's objectives by:

- offering free access to the public and schools,
- providing safe storage of archival and research materials,
- offering information on upcoming projects and events regarding BC parks,
- acknowledging those who built the provincial park systems and,
- delivering programs in support of the Council's objectives.

With the assistance of Capilano College's Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Program, 3 students, Lisa Briscoe, Valerie Loxterkamp and Matt Petranic, have prepared a draft business plan for the Centre. The vision for the Centre is:

The Parks of British Columbia Heritage Centre is dedicated to the provision of public education on why regional, provincial, national and international parks are important to society, how they are created and how they are managed. The Centre will serve as the staging ground for numerous educational and interpretive programs designed to carry out the Elders Council's objectives.

The draft plan identifies 5 programs for the Centre:

Youth Programs

Programs will be designed to educate youth on the importance of parks and nature. Material will focus on getting kids outside into the environment. Initially, some 3000 students are expected to participate.

Adult Programs

Programs will be designed to educate adults on the importance of parks with a focus on healthy living, having low impact on the outdoors, how to get outside, where to go, how to get there and what to do once you are there. Initially, some 2000 adults are expected to participate.

Research

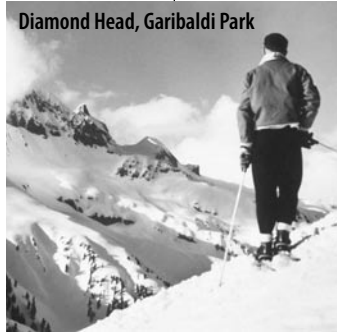
Opportunities will be provided to hold historical information and to receive and store park research material including photos, slides and documents. Space will also be provided for students and interested individuals to review the material and conduct research.

Artifact collection and display

Opportunities will be provided to collect, interpret and display important pieces of park history.

Heritage Designation

As one of only two original ranger stations in British Columbia's Provincial Park System, the Centre itself has important heritage value. Programs will be designed to showcase and maintain the heritage significance. The Centre will be recommended for designation as a District of North Vancouver Heritage Building and as a Provincial Heritage Site.



ELDERS COUNCIL WEB SITE

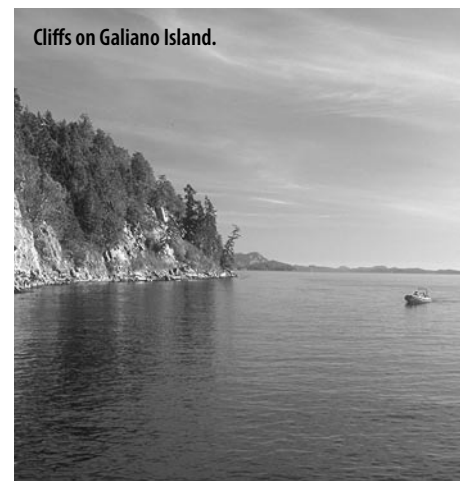
www.elderscouncilforparks.org.

The Elders Council for Parks in BC Web site is an excellent resource. It contains answers to frequently asked questions about the council, photos and summaries from our events, an electronic version of our newsletter, and information on each of our projects and how you can participate.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parks Futures Forum Nov 29/30

The Elders are planning a second futures forum this fall to facilitate a more in depth dialogue with MOE, NGOs and First Nations. The focus of the discussion will be on working together to help government achieve a sustainable provincial parks system. The venue for this forum will be on the lower mainland this time and the facility options are being investigated. Watch the website for details.



ARCHIVE COLLECTION GROWING

In cooperation with the University of Victoria Archives, the Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia has developed a policy to assist in gathering and maintaining a specialized collection of original documents illustrative of the historic development of parklands and associated public landscapes in British Columbia. Housed at the University of Victoria Archives, the collection will preserve valuable records and make them available to interested students and members of the general public.

The emphasis of the collection will be on the following types of material:

- (a) primary documents generated by persons or organizations instrumental in the identification, planning, assembly, development, management, operation, documentation or interpretation of parklands and related landscapes in British Columbia. Documents will include original letters and correspondence, working papers, diaries, notebooks, reports (in manuscript or printed form), and memoirs. Documents will not include property belonging to any level of government. Questions concerning the proper ownership or origin of documents will be investigated.
- (b) Maps, plans and charts illustrative of the items in (a)
- (c) Photos, slides and art work illustrative of the items in (a)
- (d) Sound recorded interviews of persons relevant to (a)
- (e) Audio-visual materials relevant to (a)



An archival photo taken at Alouette Lake, showing the construction of the youth crew camp.

- (f) Rare books, articles, reports and draft journal articles relevant to (a)

The temporal scope of the collection will cover material generated from the period of Colonial Government in British Columbia (1858) to the present.

The geographic focus of the collection is on Regional, Provincial and Federal Parklands in British Columbia.

If you have valuable archive material, please contact Graham MacDonald at (250) 380-1152 or 1030 Hulford St. No. 2, Victoria, B.C. V8X 3B6, macdongr@telus.net

Breaking News: We have formally received the invaluable archive collection of Ches Lyons!

RECORDING PARK HISTORY

DOCUMENTING PARK HISTORY

J.D. (Jim) Anderson continues his documentation work on the history of the provincial park system. A near-final version of many chapters is under review. Jim is enthusiastic about this project and encourages all Elders to contribute their ideas and opinions to him at Anderson.jd@shaw.ca

VIDEOTAPING PARK PIONEERS

Rick Searle is leading an important project to video archive the stories of our park pioneers. Over the past two years he has videotaped Bob Ahrens, Yorke Edwards, Ian McTaggart-Cowan, Bert Brinks, John Woodworth, and others.

Rick and his colleagues are asking participants about their most memorable experiences, biggest accomplishments, challenges, and what they would have done differently.

"We interviewed Bob Ahrens for three hours and have barely scratched the surface," says Rick. "There are so many important stories that need to be captured about the history of our parks." Rick still has many more questions and would like to speak with more Elders.

These valuable stories will be used in a variety of ways such as for the 100th anniversary of BC Parks or as a learning resource for schools and universities. A copy will be kept in the Elders Council archives at the University of Victoria.

More parks people should be interviewed – they are an invaluable resource to the Province of British Columbia and to its citizens. Anyone interested in providing financial assistance, or wishing to be interviewed as an Elder should contact Chloe O'Loughlin at CPAWS (604) 874-5323.

KAREN BLINKHORN 1974 – 2007

Died March 26 en route to Samburu National Park, Kenya in a traffic accident, aged 32.

Karen Blinkhorn loved life to the fullest and up until the day she died, it loved her right back. When she died, Karen was about to fulfill a life-long dream of seeing the great elephants of east Africa in their remaining natural habitat. She had planned and saved for the safari to Samburu National Park for years. Family and colleagues shared her enthusiasm in the months before her departure as she emailed photos of the amazing nature reserves she planned to visit.

Karen knew what she believed in from a young age. According to her sister, Alison, Karen had a strong independent streak and even as a child, she stood up for what she believed was right.

Fortunately for her colleagues at the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Karen's strong beliefs and spirit moved her to first volunteer in Ottawa and then to seek a job with the organization in British Columbia. A skilled writer with the ability to turn "a file folder full of emails and other documents" into a news release or a feature story, Karen blossomed when she became the communications coordinator for CPAWS' British Columbia chapter.

A gentle soul, quiet and understated, with a dry sense of humour, Karen was always the first to greet colleagues visiting from other CPAWS' offices with a hug and

a query about how they were doing, and she was the one who remembered every office colleague's birthday. In the years before she died, Karen created websites for CPAWS and other



community groups where people could post pictures of their favourite BC parks, or promote the establishment of new protected areas for endangered habitat. She was an invaluable help to the Elders Council and organized innovative public events to help people re-connect with our country's great natural heritage. Although she lived only 32 years, Karen

Blinkhorn's contribution to wilderness conservation and her love for her family will be felt for generations.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ELDERS COUNCIL?

WRITE: 410 - 698 Seymour St. Vancouver V6B 3K6 VISIT: www.elderscouncilforparks.org
CALL: 604-685-7445 ext. 23

YES! I support the Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia

YES, I want to become a member and have my name added to the mailing list.
(Membership is free.)

Here is my donation of: \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$_____

(Donations of \$35 or more will receive a tax receipt.)

I have enclosed a cheque I prefer to pay by Visa/MC

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____