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CENTRE VISIONING

Since its inception, the Bulkley Valley Research Centre has relied upon membership dues, supporting membership and research project administration funds to cover its budget. This strategy was effective when there were several research funding opportunities. With the dramatic reduction in the provincial government’s Forest Investment Account and the associated Forest Sciences Program, the Centre needs to either find new funding sources or adapt to a diminished funding environment.

The Centre has had several visioning and strategic direction discussions over the past few years. These include the well-attended noon-hour seminar held on March 23, 2011 and last year’s one-day visioning session at Northwest Community College on February 15, 2010. In light of the changing funding environment and the input received from the membership, the Board of Directors is currently reviewing the Centre’s strategic direction including the Communications and Marketing Plan.

RESTORING ENDANGERED WHITEBARK PINE ECOSYSTEMS OF WEST CENTRAL BRITISH COLUMBIA

While conducting research on overstory and understory dynamics of endangered whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) ecosystems in west-central British Columbia over the last few years, it became clear to forest ecologist Sybille Haeussler and Alana Clason (PhD student) that this little-studied tree species was facing extirpation in this region, due to multiple stresses and disturbances. Something needed to be done immediately.

Researchers sometimes have the reputation of conducting research for research’s sake because it is not always clear



JIM POJAR AWARD

The Jim Pojar Award recognizes publications that have come out in the past five years that improve scientific understanding or public appreciation of the ecological, social or human dimensions of natural resource use in northwestern BC.

This year, the award went to **Natalie Ban, Hussein Alidina and Jeff Ardon** for their paper [*Cumulative impact mapping: advances, relevance and limitations to marine management and conservation, using Canada's Pacific waters as a case study.*](#) Mike Ambach, North Coast Program Manager for World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Canada, nominated the trio. He stated that their work "provides an important first step forward by applying a framework for mapping and assessing cumulative effects that recognizes the spatially dynamic of human impacts on the marine environment."

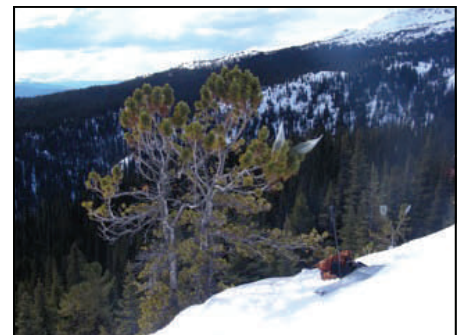


JIM POJAR BEING PRESENTED WITH THE JIM POJAR AWARD ON BEHALF OF THE 2011 RECIPIENTS

from the outset what the outcome or societal benefit might be. This story illustrates the value of research and how it is intimately connected to our ability to manage and, in this case, restore an endangered ecosystem.

Whitebark pine is a small five-needled pine tree that grows in the subalpine at higher elevations. The health of this tree has been in decline for decades due to the spread of white pine blister rust, an introduced disease. Particularly disturbing, mortality rates have skyrocketed recently due to the mountain pine beetle outbreak. In 2010, COSEWIC (the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) declared whitebark pine as endangered in Canada. Loss of this iconic tree species has serious consequences for regional biodiversity because whitebark pine is a keystone species in subalpine forests, producing large, energy-rich seeds (pine nuts) that support many different animals in the subalpine foodweb, from large mammals like grizzly and black bears, to squirrels and other small mammals and high-altitude seed-eating birds such as the Clark's Nutcracker.

The first challenge of this restoration project is to access some seed cones in the region before the bears, nutcrackers, and squirrels find them. Do you like pine nuts? So do they! In order to secure these nutrient-rich treasures, seed cages are being placed on cone-bearing whitebark pine this spring in several locations in west-central B.C., including regional parks and protected areas. It is important to select parent trees displaying resistance to white pine blister rust.



CAGING AT TOBOGGAN HILL, MAY 2011

The next challenge will be to grow whitebark pine seedlings in a local nursery (which has never been done before), using local seed. Joe Wong, of Woodmere Nursery in the Bulkley Valley, is up for the challenge. Whitebark pine seedlings (from non-local seed) are available this field



IRVING FOX AWARD

The Irving Fox Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the sustainability of natural resources in northwest BC. The award can recognize a specific project or a lifetime contribution.

This year, the award went to local chartered accountant and community-minded outdoor recreator **Brian Edmison** for his significant contribution to the achievement of sustainability of Smithers, in all its ecological, social and economic dimensions, while also raising the profile of his hometown both nationally and internationally. Brian has worked with industry and government towards achieving a sustainable local wood supply, campaigned against the Kemano Completion Project, developed local RSF Energy, and supported a variety of local initiatives including Smithers' airport runway extension, Valley Vision, and NWCC's School of Mining and Exploration.



BRIAN EDMISON RECEIVING THE IRVING FOX AWARD 2011

season from a recent UNBC research trial. Restoration trials within B.C. Parks must use locally collected seeds only, according to park policy, whereas those trials outside the parks can include testing of non-local seed sources.



A NEWLY PLANTED WHITEBARK PINE SEEDLING, JUNE 2011

The Gosnell wildfire of 2010, south of Houston, B.C., presents an ideal candidate for restoration trials this year. Microsite selection of planting areas and manual and mechanical removal of competing vegetation will be studied, in order to determine optimal conditions for white bark pine seedling growth and stand health. Seedling survival and growth will be monitored.

This research and monitoring aspect is a component of Clason's PhD research in which she will apply a landscape modelling approach, under current and future climate conditions, to determine the relative resilience of high-elevation forests to multiple disturbances based on global, local and stochastic processes. Her research will take her to a variety of subalpine areas across north and central B.C. and Alberta, that support whitebark pine - oh, and healthy populations of grizzly bears!

Throughout this restoration project, data will be collected on the behaviour of Clark's Nutcracker and other wildlife species in the whitebark pine ecosystem to determine their role in seed dispersal, competitive interactions and how these affect and may be affected by restoration practices.

Haeussler was able to secure funds for this project through [Mountain Equipment Coop](#), [BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation](#) and [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#), to whom she owes a huge thank you. With the help of the Office of the Wet'suwet'en, University of Northern B.C., Canadian Forest Service, B.C. Parks, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MoFLNRO), Woodmere Nursery, and the Bulkley Valley Naturalists, she was able to access valuable expertise in such areas as entomology, forest pathology, silviculture



VOLUNTEER DISTINCTION AWARD

The Centre's Volunteer Distinction Award went to **Steve Osborn**, for the second time. In 2009 Steve was unable to accept the award in person because he was too busy volunteering. Steve is recognized for his outstanding volunteer contribution to the Centre's Valley Vision project.

Valley Vision offers help in navigating existing land use plans and promotes communication among residents, planners and developers toward a comprehensive vision for the valley's future. Central to the project is its interactive web site ValleyVision.ca, a user-friendly portal to existing planning information and a repository for the information and views needed for building a long-term, valley-wide vision. It includes a primer on planning processes, a brief history of events that have shaped the present Bulkley Valley communities and a number of planning resources. A work in progress, it relies on public input to fill in gaps and articulate a future as good as, or better, than the one the valley currently enjoys, and each page has a place to leave comments or add information.



STEVE OSBORN RECEIVING THE VOLUNTEER DISTINCTION AWARD 2011

and parks management. In addition, numerous people offered their expertise on this project, either free of charge or for nominal compensation. The researchers thank the following people for their generosity and enthusiasm:

Kerrith McKay (Bird Biologist), Rosamund Pojar (BV Naturalists), Alex Woods (Forest Entomologist), Dave Coates (Silviculturist), Brian Fuhr (retired Wildlife Biologist and Land Use Planner), Don Pigott (Yellow Point Propagation) and Jodie Krakowski (Forest Geneticist), Linda Tackaberry and Hugues Massicotte (UNBC), and student volunteers Nicholas Thum and Courtney Berdan.



ALANA & COURTNEY PLANTING A WHITEBARK PINE SEEDLING, JUNE 2011

BULKLEY VALLEY LAPTOP SHARE

Seven laptops were donated from community members to the Bulkley Valley Research Centre's laptop share program. All of these laptops were refurbished through BC Web with funds from the Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation as well as in-kind support from BC Web.

The idea was that students would mainly be using these computers for papers and assignments, so each laptop's memory was erased, the operating system re-installed and fitted with Open Office.

Due to the limited number of laptops, the program was only able to support students at the Northwest Community College (NWCC). There were five laptop recipients, starting in the fall and ending in early May. Three of these students were part of the Essential Skills for Work (ESWK) program, which is a community-based program that integrates employment and preparation skills with personal development. The remaining students were working towards completing university credit courses at NWCC or other institutions. Prior to the program, all of these students had limited access to computers outside of class time or college hours. As a result, this opportunity allowed them to complete assignments and papers on their own time.



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NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Alison Beal is the Fur Institute of Canada's former executive director (1991-2000) and has served on the BC Wildlife Federation's board of directors, the BC Trappers Association, and was a founding director of the Canadian Outdoors Heritage Alliance. In addition, she has worked cooperatively with the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission and the governments of Yukon, BC, and NWT. Alison is a communicator with long experience in helping scientists share information and develop strategies on maintaining balance and integrity when dealing with controversy. She is most recently a co-author of *Carnivores of British Columbia*. Alison resides in Telkwa, B.C. with her husband Dave Hatler.



Greg Knox has been executive director of Skeena Conservation Trust since October 2007 and is responsible for the overall management of the trust's activities. He earned a Bachelor of Science in geography from the University of Northern BC in 2000 and became a certified Fisheries Technician and Field Supervisor with the Nisga'a Fisheries program. In 2003, Greg also partnered in a Terrace-based ecotourism business guiding grizzly bear and jet boat tours while continuing with his fisheries work. Greg is currently enrolled in the MSc. program in environmental science at Royal Roads University.



Paul Wojdak obtained a B.Sc in chemistry and geology from McMaster University and a M.Sc. in economic geology from the University of BC. He joined Cominco Limited in 1974 as a mineral exploration geologist and worked throughout western Canada and the USA with Cominco and subsequently with Westmin Resources. In 1992, he joined the B.C. Ministry of Energy and Mines as Regional Geologist. Key components of the position are to track and document mining and exploration activity, to promote mineral potential, and to be a source of geology and minerals knowledge. Paul is currently president of the Smithers Exploration Group and active in the Minerals North Association.