

PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ DES ANCIENS DU SERVICE DES GARDES DE PARC

Spring 2022 Newsletter

BOX 1611, Turner Valley AB., T0L-2A0

E-mail: parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com / Website: <https://parkwardenalumni.com>

Membership: Open to all former park wardens and all those supportive of
the Alumni Society and its work



Our Mission Statement

“Maintaining the culture and tradition of the National Park Warden Service by fostering good will and assistance through mentoring, volunteerism, historical commemoration, advocacy, and social activities.”



A Reminder to Start Things Off

Please be sure to pay your annual membership fee! These fees are an important source of our income allowing us to carry on! New members are welcome! We are still offering a free “first-year membership”, however, this offer expires December 31, 2022.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

The Warden Service Alumni continues making good progress here. Phase 11 is all but done, Phase 12 is well underway and a grant application for the next round is in the works. The alumni was fortunate and very grateful to receive several generous donations for this project including ones from the Murray Dawson family and Darryl Grams. Jim Murphy is head of this sub-committee and Susan Hairsine and Monique Hunkeler are our two well-qualified interviewers.

At the suggestion of President Dave Reynolds we are moving forward with developing and using a self-generated interview process for wardens in hard for us to reach locales, especially the eastern regions of Canada. A list of questions will be sent to the subject who answers as best he or she can and then returns the

responses. They could serve as the basis for a later in-person interview should opportunity permit. You can tell that we are doing the best we can with the resources at hand.

ON PUBLIC SPEAKING

“Perhaps sometime you may be called on to make a public address. Let me give you a few tips drawn from my public appearances. The first step to success is to get your audience in good humour. . . . When they open their mouths to laugh they lift the latch to their intellect, and before they have time to close the door, you can slip in the points you want them to take home. And the best and easiest way to get them to laugh is to make yourself the butt of the joke. The audience likes to think they have outsmarted you.”

Robert E. Campbell. *I Would Do It Again*

SOCIAL NEWS

Mike Henderson, old and new style Banff Park Warden, will be retiring this July. (See two page spread in April 7th issue of Banff-Canmore “Rocky Mountain Outlook”)

The bulk of his career was as dog-master following in the footsteps of Scott Ward, Gord Peyto and Alfie Burstrom. He leaves having been awarded “Blue Line” magazine’s 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award. Mike is one who handled the transition well from generalist to gun toting warden.

Never one to hog the glory Mike gives credit to his mentors in the service, wardens Frank Burstrom, Tim Auger, Marc Ledwidge, Brad White and Terry Willis.

Like a number of his predecessors Mike and wife Nadine plan to settle on the West Coast.

THE BAND “THE WARDENS”

This spring the band went on tour starting in Cranbrook and then on to Edson, Fort St John, Quesnel, Burns Lake, Kitimat and Prince Rupert. All performances except Edson were in performing arts centres. One week after the tour ended the band was invited to perform for the Canadian Folk Music Awards in P.E.I. Their half hour performance can be viewed on “YouTube.” In May the band has a three-day tour in Penticton, Invermere for Wings Over the Rockies, and Ponoka (more marathon driving!). This summer the band will also be playing several festivals.

During the pandemic Bradley Bischoff left the band and Ray and Scott along with fiddler Scott Duncan have carried on. John Cronin, from Invermere, plays with the band as an ace guitarist when he is available. During Covid The Wardens produced their fourth album "Sold Out at the Ironwood". The album was nominated for Folk Roots Album of the Year by the Alberta Country Music Association and for Traditional singer of the year by the Canadian Folk Music Assoc.

WARDEN KITE-SKIING ADVENTURES

Ray Schmidt, seasonal Res-Con staffer and member of “The Wardens” undertook a long distance kite-ski trip in northern Canada this spring. He describes his planned trip here:

“I’ve started the kite trip I was hoping to do two years ago. I’m planning to make it from Déline to Kugluktuk in three weeks this April. I’ll be travelling by ski and will have three kites with me to hopefully sail a good portion of the distance across ice and land when favourable conditions exist. . I fly (by plane) from Yellowknife. Fingers crossed for favourable winds at Déline. Days are getting long up here.

The P.W.S.A.S. newsletter is published two or more times yearly. Member’s articles are welcome

Articles, membership enquiries and other matters may be sent to the society at the addresses at the top of page one.

Executive:

President – Dave Reynolds

Vice-President – Cliff White

Secretary-Treasurer – Marie Nylund

Membership – Marie Nylund

Directors: (2 & 3 year terms)

Perry Jacobson

Don Mickle

Dale Portman

Kathy Calvert

Jim Murphy

Colleen Reynolds

Alan Westhaver

Gordon Anderson

Perry Davis – Newsletter editor

Regional Representatives

Mountains – Gord Anderson

West Coast – vacant

North & Yukon – Tom Elliot

Prairies – vacant

Ontario – John Taylor

Eastern Canada –

Anyone interested in serving as a Regional Rep. please contact the society

“ From Déline, I plan to travel across Great Bear Lake, then overland into the Dismal Lakes region and into the Coppermine watershed to the community of Kugluktuk, NU. This year I have two route options – one involves more lake travel and less overland (and quicker into the barrenlands).

“If anything goes wrong, I can activate my SOS on the Garmin InReach. Rescues go through the local RCMP detachments who will determine the course of action from there. Kugluktuk has a Search and Rescue team and it doesn’t appear that Déline does.

UPDATE: Problems did arise. The ice on Great Bear Lake was covered in shards like shark teeth. By day five Ray’s sleds were being ripped apart forcing him to turn back. Next year with metal sleds?

“ I became interested in the route when Scott Ward told me of a trip his RCMP grandfather (Denny LaNauze) took around 1912 where he was ordered to travel to the Bloody Falls region to apprehend two men who had killed two mission priests setting up churches in the north. A fascinating book has been written about the entire ordeal and shines light on the significant cultural differences that existed at the time. It’s called **Bloody Falls of the Coppermine: Madness and Murder in the Arctic Barrenlands** by McKay Jenkins. I used the story as the initial idea for a choice of route and look forward to meeting locals in the area. Available from Amazon or your local bookstore should be able to order it in.”

KITE SKIING HAS A BANFF WARDEN OFFICE HISTORY

The first warden known to kite-ski was Jack Romanson. As the Bryant Creek district warden he got tired of the long ski trip down the Spray Lakes so he bought a parachute from a war surplus store. Once at the start of the lakes he got set up. Its not known if he had a harness to attach himself to the ‘chute (that would have left his hands free to pole) of whether he held the cords. All went well until he found himself airborne – truly kite-skiing. Did he let go as soon as he started to leave earth? Did he hang on until things were getting dangerous? How far did he go and how did he land? The ending remains to be found out.

AIN’T LOVE GRAND to the tune of “Johnny B. Goode.”

The pendant in the photo is from the second or third century A.D and is one of many that were widespread throughout the Roman Empire of that time. The archaeologist who has been studying it has this to say:

“From Spain to Iraq, everyone wanted it. The poem is about as simple as you can get [with its] easily reproducible rhythm that sounds like the main verse of the Chuck Berry song.”

Translated from the Greek it reads: “They say/ What they like/ Let them say it/ I don’t care/ Go on, Love me/ It does you good.”



RETIREEES AND THE LATEST FEDERAL BUDGET

In a pre-budget consultation brief the National Association of Federal Retirees identified three areas for investment to benefit our members and all Canadian seniors: 1) a national seniors strategy that boosts home care and establishes national standards for long-term care tied to funding; 2} improvements to retirement income security, especially for low-income seniors; and 3) investments in veteran well-being and equitable outcomes.

“This budget holds a sprinkling of measures that respond to some of the issues that are important to our members, and older Canadians,” notes Federal Retirees president Jean-Guy Soulière. “but based on the commitments made in this budget, and those that are missing from it, it’s clear that our work isn’t over yet. We’re continuing to advocate for our members, especially as the budget implementation act comes into play over the coming weeks — because that’s where the real details are.”

CASTLEGUARD WARDEN CABIN

It is located in a small clearing at the junction of the Castleguard and Alexandra Rivers. Access to the cabin is now difficult; it used to be by the Alexandra Fire Road but large sections of that have been washed out and not restored.

Bob Woods was one of the wardens who used the cabin back in the day. His grandson Clayton made the trip there this summer in his memory and sent in the picture below. As you can see it's a small cabin. Keith Everts did have one complimentary thing to say of it: "It's the only cabin you can put your pants on standing on the upper bunk."

Like all warden cabins it comes with its own



history and stories. Retired warden Larry Gilmour recalls hearing of an earlier cabin there but on lower ground. He could find no sign of it but wasn't sure he was looking in the right place. He thinks it might have been a Jimmy Simpson Cabin. The wardens were using a cabin at this site before the present one was built and it might have been that one. There was another cabin halfway along the fire road that Dale Loewen remembers. It was built for use of the fire road construction crew and they left it standing for anyone travelling the road who might need it. He also recalls some plans to build a cabin on Watchman Lake. That would have been useful for fall boundary patrols but those plans never materialized.

SLIP-SLIDING AWAY

As you have probably heard, the ice that was holding the glacial debris in place under the Abbot Pass Alpine Hut is melting. Site investigations have determined that the hut cannot be saved. Parks Canada does not, apparently, plan to relocate the hut. It is removing all man-made objects from the hut – windows, doors,

The cabin is not well sited as there is no nearby water source! One story has it that Jimmy Rimmer failed to have the logs hauled to the chosen site so the carpenters built it where they were stocked. Another story, possibly the second part of the first, has it that the carpenter foreman did it because he was not on good terms with the wardens.

The cabin name sign visible in the photos has no number on it. That's odd. There is also no tack shed. Perhaps the thinking was that horses weren't needed as you could drive to the cabin and from there travel by Shank's mare.

Gord Antoniuk sent in some photos of him and Scott Ward packing in hay one fall. The hay was stored under tarps so there could not have been much concern about deer and elk eating it. They started from the Sunset Pass trailhead, where once,



long ago, there was a warden cabin and forded the North Sask. River. They had a better time of it than Ian Pengelly or Don Mickle on a later trip. They had gone in with archaeologist Gwynn Langeman. Ian left a day early, passed an outfitting party who later caught up to a completely soaked, hat-, badge-less and incommunicative Ian. Later, when Don and Gwynn came to the river Don's horse had to swim; Gwynn's horse found a gravel bar to walk across on so she made it across high and dry!

furniture, the stove and so on and presumably leaving natural objects to their fate at the site.

With the thawing in this area some interesting artifacts are likely to turn up! However, the thawing that is undermining the hut is also making access to it from both sides of the pass dangerous.

Many of us are sure to have quite a range of memories of time spent at the hut. Sid Marty had his “Requiem for Abbot Pass Hut” published in the B.C. “Tyhee.”

MINI-RE-UNIONS

Alan Westhaver is looking for a campsite where our members (and wanna-be members) can get together at what he calls a “mini-reunion.” The date will probably be early this summer before campgrounds get busy and crowded. Several sites are being looked at, but none are as convenient as possible for people to reach in reasonable time but no decision has yet been made. As there will very likely be a charge for the campground this will be passed on to those who attend. The alumni association is fronting money for this purpose but our treasury can’t afford to pay the entire cost.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Dale and Kathy, indomitable authors, are at work on “A Short History of the Warden Service” up to and including the handgun debate that ended by reducing the service to a strictly law enforcement one. They have completed the opening chapters covering the careers of James Harkin, Howard Sibbald, Kootenay Brown, Lewis Swift and Bill Peyto. What Dale needs now is information on other early wardens up to the 1950’s! So if you can help, please contact him.

You know those stinky, mosquito breeding, algae covered places called swamplands – well Ed Struzik has written a book in their defense, *Swamplands*. Those smelly places play an important role in an ecosystem by purifying water, storing carbon, providing valuable habitat for a wide variety of life-forms from the amoeba to the moose and buffering the advances of wildfires especially when dammed by beavers. Their value to waterfowl hardly needs to be mentioned. They are threatened by human development and many have gone under or suffered collateral damage as a result.

Much of the book – dense with information – consists of first hand accounts of “swampers” working around the globe such as a N. Carolina biologist working to re-introduce the red fox to the Pocosin Lakes peatlands, a rock-climber-biologist working at preserving rare native plants in Kauai’s Alaka’i swamp and an entomologist working in Alberta’s Wagner Fen outside Edmonton. You may hold your nose the next time you pass a swampland but don’t turn it up when you hear of yet another one being threatened.

CALL for VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in spending a day at the Heritage Park Warden cabin passing on stories of what it was like to be warden? The public young and old will be delighted to meet someone who worked as a national park warden back-country or front-country. What’s required: no more than one day of your time this summer – more if you like. The Park’s requirements for such “special purpose” volunteers are kept to a minimum. The park opens this summer May 21.

FINAL WORD (about the oral history project)

As President of the Alumni Society, I would like to add to Perry’s comments above about the “self-generated oral history questionnaire for retired Wardens and Res Conservation personnel.” Our quest for gathering oral histories from as many retirees as possible seems to be a never-ending-story unto itself. Our current process requires funding from members’ fees and the Alberta Government’s grant program. We can only do about 10 face-to-face or telephone interviews a year with those resources. It would take more than a decade to complete the interview process at that pace. We will continue the more formal interview process as resources allow, but many of you, particularly those of you living in the north, central and eastern regions, could accelerate the oral history

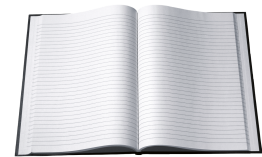
process by completing the self-generated questionnaire and returning it. We would like to include as many of the retirees as we can get so their stories can be highlighted on the alumni website and be included with your co-workers in the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies Archives. Please tell us your story about being a Park Warden or a Resource Conservation Specialist via the questionnaire process. You can obtain the questionnaire package by contacting one of the following people:

Don Mickle (gdmickle@telus.net) or Perry Jacobson (pcjacobson1@gmail.com).

The questionnaire is easy to complete and return. Please help us gather as many oral histories as we can. Thank you. Cheers.

David Reynolds, President, Park Warden Service Alumni Society

Talk to yourself: there are times when you need expert advice
Commandment 1 of the 12 Commandments for Seniors.



FACEBOOK

Our Park Warden Service Alumni Society Facebook Page continues to be popular. Thank you to everyone who has been posting photos and notices. Some of the most recent popular postings are vintage black and white photos posted by Mike Dillon of park wardens in training during the 1950s and 1960s. Another popular posting was made by Craig Elder of the 1956 Rocky Mountain Rescue film by British Pathe in 1956.

WEBSITE <https://parkwardenalumni.com>

It appears that the Website has attracted a lot of interest. Thank you to Trail Blazer Web Services for the expertise in development and maintaining the website for us.

Thank you to our dedicated members who continue to support the Park Warden Service Alumni Society.

ALUMNI CRESTS

We have a small number of these crests still available for sale. They are \$5 each. This includes the cost of shipping. If anyone wants to purchase a crest, purchases can be made by e-transfer to parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com. Or, mail a check to pay for the number of crests you wish to purchase.

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