

Park Warden Service Alumni Society

Fall 2025 Newsletter



PARK WARDEN SERVICE ALUMNI SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ des ANCIENS des GARDES de PARC

Fall 2025 Newsletter

BOX 1611, Turner Valley AB., T0L 2A0

E-mail: parkwarden2008alumni@hotmail.com /

Website: 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.”

Annual General Meeting.

The meeting was held in Elevation Place, Canmore on Wednesday, Oct. 8th. There was a slight delay in getting started in order to get Zoom up and running. Worth it as Zoom has allowed for wide-spread participation.

Our president got through business with efficiency and dispatch. The essential business: the financial report, the auditor's statement and the list of members, was all prepared and presented by our more than capable secretary-treasurer Marie Nylund. Membership has increased slightly which is good news.

Eric Langshaw gave a quick report on the Oral History Project - the PWSAS' major endeavour at present. There wasn't much to report as, at present, we are searching for new interviewers - no shortage of interviewees! However, Rosemary, Eric's wife offered - she is very familiar with the Warden Service and all she needs now is a recorder to be in business.

Perry Davis gave a quick report on the idea of participating in next year's "Days of Yore" at Heritage Park as an excellent way of making the PWSAS more widely known (this year's event was popular and very well attended). It fits in with the "Warden's Cabin" on the park's grounds. Some of the participating groups put on re-enactments (knights in armour jousting on horseback for example), and others had staffed displays. A display would work well for the PWSAS: a canvas wall tent is available and so is Smokey Guttman's model warden cabin. Some warm bodies are needed - they could be making and serving 'warden coffee' but, most importantly, informing the public about the Real Warden Life - the more colourful the stories the better!

He also informed the board that the Kootenay Crossing Warden Station along with picnic sites and probably other infrastructure are being removed as part of a cost-cutting program. Who knows how far it will go? Brian Spreadbury added that while using the Trent-Severn Waterway this summer he learnt that next year there will be a 15% cut to the park! So, it's national.

The President dealt with our revised Constitution and Bylaws (not much to discuss there) and the review of our Mission Statement. Dave has been instrumental in putting together the Strategic Plan - the 5-year marching orders for the PWSAS. The Strategic Plan (2026-2031) is still under review and once it is completed, you should definitely read it as it sets the course for your society.

The Mission Statement was quickly introduced by Dave and came up for heavy discussion under “New Business.” The proposed changes are to expand it to take in a larger membership. At present it refers to the “National Park Warden Service.” Dave is of the understanding that this necessarily includes all associated staff plus all staff currently carrying out duties formerly done by the “Warden Service.” The wording, especially as ‘warden’ now has a very restricted sense, needs to be re-jigged to make it more inclusive. Also, the Alumni’s efforts to draw in more members outside the mountain parks and the Yukon have fallen flat.

Most of the discussion centered on drawing in past staff whose work brought them together with the warden service, such as park naturalists, finance staff, etc. Brad Bischoff is going to make a point of inviting recent retirees he knows to join.

There was also discussion of joining with the Parks Heritage Conservation Society (P.H.C.S.) but how to maintain our identity at the same time? There was a fairly strong feeling that the word “Warden” had to be kept. Dave pointed out that the P.H.C.S. is national in its membership. We welcome thoughts and comments on these issues from all our members. We are talking **the long-term future of our Society**. A move has to be made or, as our numbers decline, so will the Society!

The P.W.S.A.S. newsletter is published 2 or more times yearly for members of the society. Articles, membership enquiries and other matters may be sent to the society at the addresses top of page one.

Executive:

President – Dave Reynolds
Vice-President – Cliff White
Secretary-Treasurer – Marie Nylund
Membership – Marie Nylund

Directors: (2 & 3 year terms)

Dale Portman
Kathy Calvert
Jim Murphy
Scott Ward
Mike Henderson
Colleen Reynolds
Alan Westhaver
George Lukiwski
Brian Spreadbury
Perry Davis

Regional Representatives

Mountains – vacant
West Coast – Pete Clarkson/Bob Hansen
North & Yukon – Tom Elliot
Prairies – vacant
Ontario – Allan Gibbs/Dan Reive
Eastern Canada – Vacant

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

Election of new officers. Dave Reynolds’, Marie Nylund’s, Dale Portman’s, Alan Westhaver’s, and Kathy Calvert’s terms were up. They all agreed to stand for another term. Scott Ward, Mike Henderson and George Lukiwski put their names forward and were voted in. That keeps our board at thirteen members. Perry Jacobson, Eric Langshaw and Bradley Bischoff stepped down. It should be noted that Perry has been on the board since it was first formed! Thank you Perry for your long, valuable and dedicated service. We adjourned to the Sandtraps (golf course) Restaurant! A few had other business and, alas, we could not set up the Zoom there. Jimmy Rimmer and his dogs, the various escapades of staff at Saskatchewan Crossing and the Lake Louise trailer court as well as memorable incidents involving Chief Park Wardens were some of the stories told!

2026 REUNION – May 5, 6th, 7th and 8th, 2026.

Thank you to Allan and Lisa Westhaver for their hard work in organizing our reunions!

The dates for the **2026 Reunion** have been confirmed: it will take place **Tuesday, May 5th through Friday, May 8th** at the **Elks Campground in Salmon Arm**. We’re excited to share that the event has been **extended by one day** so we can book the **Elks Hall for a special concert by *The Wardens*!**

More details about the reunion will be available in the new year. In the meantime, **mark your calendars and save the date** for next year’s gathering!

The Wardens

Last fall/winter/spring was our busiest season yet with around 50 shows. As a result of our success at four performing artist showcases in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Montana and Portland, Oregon, we ended up with many tours. We did a fall tour of Saskatchewan for 10 shows and also a spring tour there of 10 shows. We played the Performing Arts Centre in Great Falls to an audience of 900, and then came back to Montana for another tour. We did two tours of Washington and Oregon as well as two shows in Northern California. We also played some Alberta shows in Leduc, Stoney Plain, Athabasca and other smaller shows. We took the summer off as Ray was working in Nahanni Park. This week we have three Alberta shows and an upcoming Vancouver and Vancouver Island tour in January.

OBITS

Louis Brian Comin - June 25, 1947 to March 15th, 2024. Lou was born in Blairmore, Alta to Pat and Peter Comin and had a sister Gale and a brother Barry. They lived in Bellevue until the mine closed and then they moved to Canmore where Pete worked in the mine.



Lou started grade seven there and sat right beside Cheryl dePencier, who became his best friend, soul mate, love of his life. They went together ten years and then were married in 1970.

Lou got a Forestry diploma from NAIT with honours. He joined the Alberta Forest Service and he and Cheryl lived in Ranger districts at Salt Prairie and South Wapiti. His dream was to become a National Park Warden which he did starting as a seasonal at Pocohontas Warden Station in Jasper, Alta, then moving to a full-time position in Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. Then on to Nahanni National Park as the youngest Chief Park Warden and back to Riding Mountain as Area Manager living in the townsite of Clear Lake.

After a short stint in Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan it was on to Wood Buffalo National Park in Fort Smith, NT where he retired. Here he received the Governor General Award for his contribution to Parks. Living in the various Parks Lou and Cheryl made many dear close friends in the park and surrounding area. The Warden Family were a big part of their lives. Lou loved the Parks, the Wardens and did his best to support his Wardens as he would call them.

Some Interesting and Startling Facts about Canada's Water.

There is a widespread belief, and not just among Canadians, that Canada has an enormous water supply. Well, according to the *Canadian Atlas* which uses fact checking editors (an endangered species) here is where approximately 50% of the world's renewable freshwater exists: Brazil: 18% (surprise!); China: 9%; The U.S.A. 8% (think Mississippi and + about 1/2 of the Great Lakes); and Canada 7%! A few other 'water' facts: 0.62% of the world's freshwater is groundwater but only 0.07% of that exists in lakes and rivers and in the soil. More ice melted from the Athabasca Glacier in 2023 than in any one of the ten previous years (from hydrographic records, not guesswork).

Bragg Creek Copy-Cats from *Bragg Creek Story of Our Past*



Warden cabins were connected by phone to each other and to central offices over miles of phone line strung through the trees. Many wardens can recall hours summer and winter maintaining those lines and then taking those lines down when radios took over. Well before phones came to Bragg Creek the resourceful citizens went out and bought phone sets and ran barbed wire on insulators from house to house. It was known as "The Snake Line."

Below: "Warden Lodge: Lake Louise" 1910's? Whyte Museum Archives



1933 Warden Conference from a Ulysses LaCasse Scrapbook in the Whyte Museum Archives