

Tread Lightly and Listen to the Land

THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

This bird is no ordinary pigeon

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Passages from Silverdale, Mission,
Abbotsford and beyond.



Message from the Editorial Committee

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Bruce Klassen, Nik Cuff, Don Mair, Mike Deiner
Cover photo: Band-tailed pigeon, Bruce Klassen

This issue of the Footprint Press is dedicated to the Land. Land use. Land abuse. Lands lost. Land use decision-making and the experience of citizens who care deeply about the Land. The majority of land use decisions are made by municipal councils with little or no experience in sustainable planning guided by city staff whose job security depends on a steady stream of development applications. Emphasis on economic growth and development often overshadows concerns about environmental and social impacts. As a result, we are seeing unprecedented losses of forests, critical wildlife habitat and prime agricultural lands to various forms of development while property taxes for average citizens skyrocket and their quality of life plummets. Developers and speculators call these losses “progress”. But when the final crop is pavement, the ability of the Land to sustain life is destroyed forever.

Citizens who care about the Land and its creatures are starting to demand another way. The priceless environmental capital of a community including its woodlands, farmlands, hinterlands and wetlands must be protected. The term NIMBY, used by the development industry

to silence opposition and proceed without compromise, has become a term of abuse. If you don't care about your back yard, what do you care about? Who else will speak up for Nature?

We have observed over and over again the frustration of citizens with our municipal public hearings. The hearings occur but the councilors don't seem to be listening. Whether it be a shopping development in a sensitive ravine ecosystem, a large townhouse complex sandwiched between agricultural lands in a rural neighborhood, turning the forests of Sumas mountain into greyscapes, paving an old growth forest to put in a parking lot, or a massive housing development in sensitive Silverdale, people are saying the same thing **“Please respect the Land and all its inhabitants”**. But council is not listening.

But We are listening. And we are learning. And we are growing. Courageous citizens who care deeply about the Land are standing up to speak for the Land's wildlife, the salmon, the streams and the trees. The writers in the Footprint Press are showing the way. Hope for the future lies in stewardship, collaboration and always in action.

CARING FOR YOUR LAND INTO THE FUTURE

How often, when viewing the trees on one's property, do thoughts go beyond personal considerations? These usually include aesthetic features, leaves that may be shed, shade cast, views limited, or branches that may fall. The services of nature seldom enter the picture, yet their role is essential.

Preservation of indigenous forest cover, and conservation of associated ecosystems, allows nature's services to mitigate against climate change, hold water resources, cleanse and cool our air, preserve wildlife habitat, and retain the natural beauty of our communities.

While media coverage regarding climate change seems focused on energy production and consumption, conservation of the natural systems that will offset the impact of CO₂ emissions, through carbon sequestration and storage, is also profoundly important. I reference the 2009 publication of the Land Trust Alliance of BC, *Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change through the Conservation of Nature*, by Wilson and Hebda (<http://landtrustalliance.bc.ca/docs/LTAClimateChangeWebSingleP.pdf>).

Carbon sequestration refers to the net amount of carbon absorbed each year by a biological system, after the carbon released by it to the atmosphere is accounted for. Studies show that annual net uptake of carbon is generally low or negative in forests less than 20 years old, reaching peak uptake at the intermediate age of 30-120 years. Replacement of a large tree with a sapling won't have sequestration benefits for a long time – time that we can't afford to wait.

Preservation of trees within their associated ecosystem also prevents carbon release that results from forest removal. When the total amount of carbon contained in all the components of the forest ecosystem is considered, the carbon storage capacity is of vital significance. While older forests reach the point of accumulating relatively small amounts of carbon each year as their growth rate slows, they store an enormous amount in their wood, in surrounding vegetation, and in the soil, as compared to younger ecosystems – in coastal forests possibly in excess of 1000 tonnes of carbon per hectare.

The conversion of old forests to gardens or to plantations of younger trees results in a huge reduction in the amount of carbon stored, as well as the quantity of carbon that can be sequestered.

It is estimated that the conversion of five million hectares of old-growth forests to younger plantations in Oregon and Washington over the last 100 years has released 1.5 to 1.8 billion tonnes of carbon to the atmosphere.

When our land offers the opportunity, surely one of the most significant contributions we can make towards the well-being of our planet is to conserve the life that it holds. Even if it is not a forest, but a tree or a patch of native vegetation, it is a positive step from all points of view – caring for the land and the beautifully inter-woven life systems that it sustains - for the future.

Caring property owners often express the commitment that they would do nothing to destroy their land. Sadly, the inevitable "for sale" sign takes the property a big step closer to the trees being "turned into money", with a precious ecosystem destroyed in the process. A functioning ecosystem, from the invertebrates of the soil to the pollinators and the birds, the amphibians, the mammals, to the tallest of trees, can be lost to the blade of a D9Cat. The end result can be the arrival of invasive species and a long-term management problem, fraught with frustration – to say nothing of the loss of nature's services.

The happiest step we have taken with our property, previously in Abbotsford, and more recently on Pender Island, is to ensure its protection through conservation covenants. It is greatly reassuring to know that the life that depends upon this land will be secure into the future.

Our conservation covenants provide stipulations that run with the title of the property, in perpetuity, to prevent subdivision, and protect the trees and the indigenous vegetative under-storey. Safe habitat will be ensured for many, and the song of the birds will reach out into the community beyond.

As Ansel Adams said, "Let us leave a splendid legacy for our children... let us turn to them and say, 'This you inherit. Guard it well, for it is far more precious than money, and once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price.'"

Further information on caring for your land through conservation covenants may be obtained from TLC The Land Conservancy of BC, 1-877-485-2422.

Sylvia Pincott

Naturalist Advisor for Naturescape British Columbia

The Band-tailed Pigeon

Getting to know the Species at Risk living in our area:

Featured on the cover page of this Footprint Press edition, is a photograph of a magnificent-looking bird, the Band-tailed Pigeon. The beautiful photograph of that bird was captured by local artist, Bruce Klassen, who provides a first hand account of living with Band-tails.

The Band-tailed pigeon, also known as the Forest pigeon and as "*Patagionas Fasciata*" is the largest pigeon in North America, having a length of fourteen to fifteen and a half inches, or thirty-five to thirty-nine centimetres, and a lifespan of up to 22 years. It closely resembles the Rock Pigeon, but unlike that pigeon, the Band-tail is native to North and South America, while the Rock Pigeon was introduced. The Band-tail also has a longer, more slender body than the Rock Pigeon but, like it, is a light grey, having a softer grey-banded, and "fan-like" tail. The Band-tailed adults, both male and female appear identical, having a white semi-circle ring appearing at the napes of their necks. That marking is followed by a beautiful iridescent green area below that, and a pinkish-mauve hue to their white chests and stomachs. The juvenile pigeons lack these markings. Instead, grey feathers, tipped with white, cover their entire bodies. Black eyes, ringed with red, and yellow, black-tipped bills, and yellow feet, distinguish the Band-tailed Pigeons from Rock Pigeons (Doves) which have black bills, red eyes, and salmon-coloured feet.

Found along most of the Pacific West Coast from Alaska down to northern Argentina, the Band-tails prefer forests of mixed deciduous and large coniferous trees, growing at low to mid-level elevations of from 900m to 3600m in the mountains. They can also be found in forests bordering minimal clear-cut areas, or around streamside forests where their soft, quiet voices, having a "two-syllable... huu-oooh" sound, similar to an owl's, can be heard amongst the tall trees.

With the exception of their breeding times, which

takes place between April and September, these sociable pigeons enjoy travelling in small flocks, numbering more than fifty. Most of the year, foraging for food takes place mainly at ground level amongst the trees, or comfortably within the trees, with the conifers also serving as roosting places. These foraging areas produce the Band-tails' varied, and rich diet which consists of berries, seeds, acorns, other nuts, tree and shrub buds, flowers and grain.

Early in their breeding season, the Band-tails appear at mineral springs and tidal flats.

Later in this season, large numbers of them are drawn to the higher areas, where they feed heavily on the ripe berries. Shortly after this time, nesting begins. This frequently involves many Band-tail pairs setting up their nests in trees within very close proximity to one another. Following a strict division of labour, nesting starts in early to midsummer, with the male collecting the twigs as nesting material, while the female constructs a nest to her liking. Taking up to three days to complete, the nests are built at a height of between 15 to 40 feet up the tree, on horizontal branches or on branches against the tree trunks. Typically, one or two eggs are laid in the loose, simple, cross-wise constructions of twigs, which serve as nests. Sharing in the incubation of the eggs, the parents take their turns until the eggs hatch in approximately 18 to 20 days. The hatchlings are fed "pigeon milk", a fat and protein rich substance, produced in the crops of both parents. Following their fledging, the young pigeons are taken care of by both parents for a considerable length of time.

Band-tailed Pigeons are Blue-listed by the BC government, putting them in the "At Risk" category, making them "particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events". They are listed Federally as "Special Concern" to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

In order to protect this beautiful bird from continuing threats, it has been suggested that "supporting local land trusts, petitioning government agencies and other organizations, and volunteering with conservation groups", will go a long way in helping the Band-tailed Pigeon to survive against incredible odds. Our collective support for the protection of this beautiful bird will assist them in their struggles for survival in this changing world.

Val Pack,
Mission



Living with Band-tails

To capture the cover photo of an adult Band-tailed Pigeon gracing this issue of the FPP it took me 18 years, 5 months and the last 4 hours standing perfectly and painfully still. Now you're saying to yourself "fool forgot to take the lens cap off". Well, not exactly. The truth is these pigeons are very skittish when they come into contact with humans. Even the attraction of bird feeders stocked with good, clean, dry, white-striped sunflower seed is not enough to draw them down to feed if there is any sign of movement or noise outside or even in the house. You'd be on tender hooks too if your gene pool had the same tragic life history as the Band-tailed pigeon. It was classed as a migratory game bird and hunted for food and recreation. Even as late as 1972, more than half a million Band-tails were killed in California and one quarter million in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. This was estimated to be about one-half of the entire West Coast population.

Then in the 1980s, heavy harvest of second growth low elevations occurred along the West coast as well as site preparation throughout the region. A big loser in this rapid and widespread loss of habitat was the Band-tailed pigeon. Nesting habitat in the larger trees, and food such as berries, seeds and nuts in the under story trees and bushes, was all lost as a result.

My personal observations since 1988 in our woodland on Silverhill show a sharp decline around 1994, when numbers went from 30-40 Band-tails returning annually, to less than 20 birds and then in 1998, not one returned. The following years only brought under 10 pigeons but it was always great to see any number returning to Silverhill.

Flash forward to Silverhill in July of this year, when the last Band-tailed pigeon left. He was one of 30-35 Band-tails I fed this Spring, as well as a flock of 65 Evening Grosbeaks. I went through over 500 pounds of white-stripe sunflower seeds, all with a smile on my face, because I knew the Band-tailed pigeon was a priority bird. There is also a concern across North America of dwindling numbers of Evening Grosbeaks.

So what can we do to help this listed forest pigeon to return in great enough numbers to nest in Mission and become the common native species it once was in the Fraser Valley? In the long term we need

proper forest management to ensure our only forest pigeon has tall mixed tree habitat for nesting and the under story trees and bushes such as cascara, elderberry both red and blue. Forested landowners also need to step up and become better stewards by keeping native berries such as salmonberry, thimbleberry, huckleberry, salal, and supplement these with thicker larger plantings because pigeons are less likely to see individual trees or shrubs. Protect and enhance any known mineral springs on your property as calcium and mineral deposits are essential for Band-tails' eggshell production and development of the squabs (baby pigeons). I have serious concerns about recent closures of long used natural springs around Silverhill. Is the gravel extraction around the Keystone corridor affecting historic graveling areas for our native forest pigeon?

Unfortunately detailed studies of Band-tails' life requirements have not been done until quite recently. The Band-tailed pigeon was not even mentioned in the environmental assessment of SW Mission. The study didn't find any evidence of Band-tails but CAUSS made sure that photographs were taken to the provincial ministry of the environment and entered on the record.

How can there be sustainable habitat management when there are forest voices being muted because they are not on some expert's list? Baby Band-tails have recently been observed on Silverhill. If you see Band-tails nesting locally, we want to hear from you. Contact b.causs@gmail.com.

Bruce Klassen, Silverhill



Let's Treasure and Preserve the Agricultural Land Reserve



Up until the 1970's, we were losing nearly 6,000 hectares of our precious prime agricultural land each year to the realities of urban sprawl and our rapidly expanding urban centers. Fortunately the NDP Provincial government of the day responded to this serious erosion of our agricultural land base and introduced legislation entitled BC's Land Commission Act on April 18th, 1973.

A Commission, appointed by the Provincial Government, established a special land use zone to protect BC's dwindling supply of agricultural land. This zone was called the Agricultural Land Reserve. The ALR land base was then laid out and established between 1974 and 1976, through cooperative efforts with Regional Districts and member municipalities. These Local and Regional governments, as well as other Provincial agencies, were then expected to plan in harmony with the provincial policy of preserving agricultural land. At that time the ALR was comprised of 4.7 million hectares or five percent of the Province. Out of that five percent of land dedicated to the ALR, only about one percent is considered prime farmland and much of that land is disappearing right here in the Lower Fraser Valley.

The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is an independent Crown Agency. This Commission's

mandate and mission is to preserve agricultural land for farm use and to encourage the establishment and maintenance of farm businesses throughout B.C. As it turns out, the bulk of their work has been to review and make decisions about the numerous requests they receive from citizens and Local Governments for exclusions of lands in the ALR. It is in fact a sad irony that the realities of expanding urban centers that were there in the early 70's are very much in evidence today and continues to be the single greatest threat to the integrity of the ALR.

We just have to do the math...rapidly expanding population growth next to continuing erosion of prime agricultural lands results in increasing concerns for sustainability.

We are all aware of the alarming trend in Maple Ridge, Mission, and Abbotsford of numerous requests and applications for exclusions of ALR lands, being supported by local councils and referred on to the ALC for their consideration and approval. Sadly this, it seems, has become the primary role of the ALC, rather than their intended role, which was to promote and encourage farming within the ALR.

Most recently, Maple Ridge Council voted to refer on to the ALC (Agricultural Land Commission), the Pelton proposal application for exclusion of 163

acres in the ALR, land that can only be considered prime agricultural land, land upon which they propose to develop as an industrial business park. This land is also in the midst of other actively productive farmland. I fail to see, even with the most vivid imagination, how this proposal will provide a net benefit for agriculture. Instead it will surely lead to further land speculation, precedent for more exclusion requests and a very slippery slope for viability of agriculture in that area. Not surprisingly, the Pitt Meadows agricultural advisory committee has spoken out against this application: " As farmers, we get concerned about that. The biggest concern that farmers have is the simple loss of farmland"(member Bob Hopcott: The News July 9/10). Once this land is developed as a business park, with more roads and related infrastructure, it is lost to us forever as agricultural land.

Despite these increasing and very real threats to our finite and limited agricultural land base, there continues to be strong public support for the preservation of our ALR. There is growing recognition that other significant threats of our day, such as population growth, "peak oil", climate change, and water shortages, are all realities of our time and all are impacting us and will continue to impact our food sources. We are currently utilizing a very energy dependent and largely imported food supply system, with only 48 per-cent of the Region's food requirements being produced in Metro Vancouver.

In addition, we are witnessing a change in consumer habits as it relates to food safety and food security and the inefficiencies and environmental costs of our food coming from far off lands. There is clearly a growing demand for locally grown and produced food. People have genuine concerns about where their food is coming from. Local farmer's markets are popping up in more and more communities and becoming more popular. We are seeing that this is good for us and good for our health and well-being, and definitely a positive move towards reducing our carbon footprint and increasing our self sufficiency as a community.

We all have an important role to play, in ensuring that the ALR can become a permanent legacy that we ensure will be protected for future generations. We see that the same threats of rapid urban and industrial development are even more evident today than they were when the ALR was first created. We know that these lands are finite, in fact some would argue are continually eroding. As a forward thinking society, we must develop a longer-term vision when facing these critical land use decisions. It begins with us working together in our communities and making a commitment to support those who farm the land. For more information about the ALR, visit farmlanddefenceleague.org.

Mike Gildersleeve
Maple-Ridge-Mission



Phyllis Young and Tracy Lyster manning CAUSS's kitchen garden table at the Mission City Farmer's Market. The market is held Saturdays May 9- Sept.26 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Mission Library, Lane Creek Park, on 2nd avenue. For more information visit missioncityfarmersmarket.com.

Change of Pace: Protecting Biodiversity on Sumas Mountain

As a resident of the Lower Mainland it's hard not to notice urban expansion, whether from the congested traffic, poor air quality, or emerging construction projects. This rapid growth has led to the human alteration of natural landscapes and consequential destruction of natural habitat. On a global scale, species are going extinct at a rate which trumps that of any previous mass extinction. This loss is almost exclusively attributed to this human modification of landscape and fragmentation of habitat. It has been estimated that between one half to one third of the Earth's surface has been modified by humans, making conservation efforts vital. Given the rapid development within the Fraser Valley, a focus on understanding and conserving natural local habitat seems imperative to protecting biodiversity.

As students of the University of the Fraser Valley, we had the privilege to conduct research on Sumas Mountain, a local green space that serves as an important natural habitat. Recently, there has been interest in trying to protect a part of this habitat known as the Sumas Woodlot. Currently, the Woodlot is situated on Crown Land and is under a logging lease, however there has been a great deal of discussion within the University as well as in other organizations about purchasing the Woodlot for conservation and education. Ownership by an educational institution such as UFV would prevent this habitat from being logged and the resulting disruption of habitat crucial to many native plants and animals. The Sumas Woodlot is a particularly valuable site that should be protected as it provides habitat for many endangered species, has old growth trees and high levels of biodiversity.

Sumas Mountain is characterized by an extensive Coastal Western Hemlock forest stand and supports a wide range of species, including many that are rare or endangered in our region. For example, Sumas Mountain provides habitat for endangered species such as tailed frog (*Ascaphus truei*), mountain beaver (*Aplodontia rufa*), red-legged frog (*Rana*



aurora), pacific water shrew (*Sorex bendirii*) and trowbridge's shrew (*Sorex trowbridgii*). The function that the Woodlot serves as ecological habitat coupled with the recent interest in purchasing it's lease made the Sumas Mountain Woodlot a great candidate for conducting research into how the site provides habitat and supports biodiversity in the Lower Mainland.

One of the student research projects consisted of collecting increment cores from Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*) to determine if old-growth trees were present and to consider what significance the old-growth trees would have for stand classification. Both tree diameter measurements and annual-growth ring counts taken from the increment cores showed that old-growth trees were present, where old growth consisted of trees older than 150 years. The overall ages of the trees sampled ranged from 55-244 years old, where at least 11 were verified as old growth. The presence of old growth trees as well as the presence of coarse woody debris and complex canopy layers suggests the potential that the Woodlot may be classified as an old-growth forest.

A second student research project included an ecological assessment of the Woodlot where vegetation was sampled from three Coastal Western Hemlock forest sites in order to evaluate their diversity and ecological function. The study sites consisted of a wood lot situated on the UFV Abbotsford campus, a diked riparian habitat within the Chilliwack Education Park, and lastly the Woodlot on Sumas Mountain. Randomly selected plots were generated and species presence-absence data was collected along with tree-count data. Using

biodiversity indices, we were able to determine vascular plant diversity. It was found that species richness based on tree-count data was greatest in the Sumas Woodlot site. Diversity values were also calculated for the sites based on the presence-absence data. Alpha diversity, which refers to the number of species present in an individual site, and beta diversity, which indicates a greater difference in species composition, both scored highest for the Sumas site.

Given the Woodlot's function as endangered species habitat along with the presence of old

growth trees and high biodiversity, it is apparent that the Sumas Woodlot is a valuable local green space. The Woodlot is exactly the type of local habitat we should be trying to protect given rapid development in the Fraser Valley and the large-scale decline of biodiversity. The Woodlot not only provides important habitat to native plants and animals, but it also provides a great opportunity for education and research in our own backyard.

Emily Helmer & Roxanne Snook
Students For Sustainability
UFV, Abbotsford



Many Shades of Green

The green movement was born of recognition that the conservation and respect of nature was essential to the over all well-being of the planet and all of its inhabitants. From Henry David Thoreau's

Maine Woods (1864), to Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962), awareness of the need to protect the natural world from destructive human practices is not new. With this recognition came pressure for



corporations to change their destructive practices and for consumers to be more ethical in their daily choices.

It was not long before corporations saw the opportunity to tap into the 'Green' market. What followed was the era of green washing, and the examples of such practices continue to grow faster than a healthy tree.

Green became the campaign name for any practice that claims to be eco friendly. And we all know that popular demand and necessity drives the economy. Like so many other words that have been abused and misused and have lost their real meaning, "green" is well on its way there. There is Green Real Estate and Green Laundromats, trucks painted green with "Green Landscaping" painted on the side and gas lawnmowers in the back, Hummers advertising Green Business, and Green Nike Shoe Campaigns to name a few.

Corporations that are notorious for environmental damage are now also claiming to be green. Let's never forget how green BP became after changing their name to Beyond Petroleum! The evidence speaks for itself as do the deaths of so many animals in the Gulf of Mexico. Monsanto must also be green with one patented Genetically Modified seed at a time in the process. Plasco Energy Corporation wants us to believe that it has the greenest solution yet, by turning our trash into energy despite the release of toxic chemicals into the air. Green Roads Recycling is here to save the day with recycled asphalt! I wonder how the green trees feel about that. Those not infected with pine beetles that is. We all have an inkling of the role global warming has played in that fiasco, and from what I've seen, Green Roads Recycling does nothing to lesson the heat. It's not new roads that we need. It's the end

of a car dependant culture altogether. The ultimate example of portraying a false 'green' ethic must be awarded to Lockheed Martin. See how convinced you can be that a company that produces weapons with war, death, power and control written all over them actually cares about the ecological footprint they are leaving behind.

We all know that greed is often represented by the green of the American dollar. We all know the expression 'green with envy', which may represent one's coveting all the items the Smith's have bought with their 'green' dollars. Then there's the greenish tinge that comes to one's face as they realize they cannot pay their rent and may be evicted, and let us not forget the green light that tells us when it's legal to move forward in your car, and the artificial green of the neighbour's lawn at the cost of the natural green that might actually exist if they'd stop poisoning nature's green.

Once upon a time, green actually represented a healthy land base. Green is meant to symbolize life, health, and growth in nature. Instead it has come to symbolize money first and foremost. Trees are seen as money. Grass is seen as money. Mountains are blown up, clear-cut, and leveled for money. Rivers dammed for money. Nature has been exploited beyond its capacity to survive our greed and ambivalence.

It would seem there are as many shades of green as there are shades of gray, and when it comes to using green to define a standard of practice that exploits the environment rather than benefits it, one must question; just what is green? And what are we willing to do to ensure a future that works with nature, not against her? What does green mean to you?

Elena Edwards, Mission

chuckgarden



“S’ólh Téméxw te í kw’élò Xólhmet te mekw’stám ít Kwelát”

“This is our land. We have to look after everything that belongs to us.”

[Stó:lō statement spoken before all meetings concerning the land question in the early twentieth century.]¹

The Mission Food Access Network (MFAN) is a network of agencies, government departments, non-profit groups, and citizens working on food security issues in Mission. Former names for the Mission Food Access Network were **Mission Community Food Coalition**, **Mission Community Coalition**, and **Mission Community Food Table**. These name changes reflected the gradual change of purpose from charity food groups to the broad spectrum of food security issues, and sustainable food systems. Dr. David J. Connell, professor at the University of Northern British Columbia, has pointed out that “Creating more sustainable food systems is difficult because the food choices we make on a daily basis are embedded in social structures”.² Despite this difficulty, there is a worldwide grassroots movement working towards more sustainable food systems.

In India for example, Vandana Shiva, is the leader of the Slow Food movement. In our own country, **Food Secure Canada** is an alliance of civil society organizations and individuals collaborating to advance dialogue and cooperation for policies and programs that improve food security in Canada and globally. Closer to home, **The British Columbia Food Systems Network** “advocates a food policy which places community food security as the highest priority.” This valuing of community food security is very different from our current food policy which “supports the industrial food system through regulation, subsidies, and a host of initiatives such as local removals of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve and federal agreements on trade and genetic engineering.”³

While the national and provincial food security civil societies have been focusing on creating policies, the strength of the **Mission Food Access Network** has been its action-oriented projects such as Mission’s Kitchens, participation in the 2009 Mission Film Festival and the showing of the film Fresh. Currently, MFAN also has a project “on mapping our food resources in Mission to discover our food assets and help identify gaps.”

Another Mission Food Access Network strength is the networking among MFAN members that happens both during and outside of meetings. This practical networking is also evident in the document **Food Resources in Mission** (see <http://www.mfan.ca/pdf/resources.pdf>).

While these MFAN predominately food charity projects currently serve a useful purpose, there is no doubt in my mind that food security issues also need to be dealt with on a policy level. Policy issues include having positions on the removal of prime agricultural land from the ALR and the paving over of highly sensitive wetlands. These land conflict issues that were already evident in this region 150 years ago when the local Stó:lō people woke up on February 14, 1859 to the news that their ancestral lands were being sold by Xwelitem (Halquemeylen word for white people) to Xwelitem for ten shillings per acre.⁴ This pursuit of short-term interests was the beginning of the destruction of the commons⁵ in our area. While previously, the Stó:lō ancestors had charged their descendants “with the responsibility of using locally found resources in a responsible manner”⁶, the non-aboriginal settlers’, fishers’, and miners’ greed “disturbed and disrupted the balance that had previously been maintained by the territory’s various inhabitants – human, plant and animal.”⁷

In 1962, Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book, the **Silent Spring** reminded us that “The thin layer of soil that forms a patchy covering over the continents controls our own existence and that of every other animal of the land.” In pursuing the issues surrounding food security, MFAN needs to concern itself with examining the local food system and local environmental issues. As Ernie Crey wrote a decade ago, there is much non-aboriginal people can learn from their aboriginal neighbours regarding the care of the soil, water, plants, animals, and the air.⁸ Food security is not achieved in corporate board rooms. Despite all the difficulties, food security might be achievable through the day-to-day work of grassroots organizations like MFAN and its partners.

Sieglinde Stieda, M.Ed., Mission

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Gravel Industry Trumps Local Interests

Aggregate Pilot Project Follies

The mapping concept that was put forward in the final draft plan of the Aggregate Pilot Project (APP) is all about where the aggregate industry wants the gravel the most. There is no equal consideration in the mapping concept in terms of protecting other valid public interests or concerns. The map includes “red zones” (areas too sensitive for mining) and “green zones” (areas where gravel mining takes place now or in the futures). However, the proposed red zone residents have similar concerns as residents of the green zones areas. The APP plan was supposed to resolve public conflict. The APP Draft Map does not show all the numerous gravel pits that have been grandfathered in during the last decade, many of which have 20 to 100 years of gravel reserves left.

Other interests that should be protected like tourism, views, habitat, water, communities, road safety, Agricultural Land Reserve, and health issues from dust and noise, are not fairly represented by the zones in the final APP Draft map in the Lake Errock /Deroche area. The fact that the public was not included in the 5 + years that the draft plans took to develop is starkly evident. The zoning map concept that the public ORCAP group (Okanagan Residential Communities Against the Proliferation of Urban Mining Practices) originally designed, was intended to represent all the issues of community conflicts as well as protective zones for other important interests www.orcap.org. Current mapping in the APP Draft is also totally different than one that was on the FVRD website a couple of years ago.

In the Lake Errock area there could be even more permitted expansion to the 3 area pits, in a community radius that is very small. There could be an asphalt or processing plant right across the street from Lake Errock, despite its many spawning creeks and despite silt overflows that have already killed the lake fish. This area has one of the last best salmon strongholds left in the province and is home to the Bald Eagle Festival. As well, the Green zone would be right next to or in a community with over 900 people, who depend on Deroche Mountain for their surface and ground water sources. As was shown on a map by a local pit owner, the gravel

industry has bought up much of the Deroche Mountain watershed.

I would like the provincial Minister of State for Mining, Randy Hawes, to honor what he said, and protect communities before we are sold out in favor of the aggregate industry’s excessive profit margins. <http://www.dailycommercialnews.com/article/20050630775> There is room for both, but not with this APP plan. This APP plan has too many flaws.

The myth that we need 70% or more gravel for infrastructure does not include what we send to the export market. We shouldn’t have to destroy our communities in order to export millions of tons of gravel every year for cheaper than we can get it locally (see http://www.valueinvestigator.com/datavalue/pls_.pdf). Exporting so much gravel is contrary to Minister Hawes’ statements that “gravel should be close by to make a smaller environmental footprint”.

Between 2002 and 2008 gravel revenues from aggregate increased by about 13 times. It has been a gold rush of gravel pit permitting. Growth at that rate, and at the expense of our water sources and communities, is not sustainable, and shows a total disregard for livable standards for our children’s future. We are losing our Fraser Valley creeks and streams at an alarming rate, which has escalated since this 1997 report; <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/229864.pdf>. With past talk about a barge route going from Nicomen Island, it is not hard to imagine more of our mountains and scenery being shipped to California and other destinations as has been happening in other parts of B.C.

Destruction of our community watersheds for want of gravel is a major concern, given that severe water shortage trends are projected for the very near future. So do we bury our heads in the gravel, and hope for the best? Or do we insist on amending the outdated flaws in Mining Act? If this APP is accepted, we could be locked in for a very long time with no option to reverse the damage.

Wendy Bales, Area C Director,
Fraser Valley Regional District

Keep your ear to the ground:

What are Official Community Plans?

Time and time again, Municipal Councils refer to "Official Community Plans" (OCP) to justify their land use decisions. The OCPs are legally required, expensive to create, and involve countless hours of consultation with the public, businesses, and external agencies. The OCP designates where present and future development should take place including commercial, business or residential, thereby guiding developers and speculators in their investments. The OCP also allows residents to choose where to purchase property to suit their lifestyle.

A quick survey of recent development applications in Maple Ridge, Mission and Abbotsford suggests that OCPs are not serving their communities well. Citizens reassured that the plan designates green spaces as "natural open space" or as "agricultural" are astonished to learn that this designation can be changed at any time on request of a developer. Other citizens are told that because a property has been given an urban zoning, it "must" be developed. For example, the Pelton application to remove farmland in the ALR is outside of Maple Ridge's urban containment boundary on the OCP yet council is supporting an exclusion of these lands for development. Similarly the Meadowlands townhouse development in Mission is designated rural on the OCP but was supported by Mission council on behalf of a developer recently quoted as saying "I can't pick up my property and move it." The fact that the residents of this rural area are not able to move their properties either does not seem to have been considered. Marlisa Power of Trees not Townhomes in Abbotsford concluded, "You can rally, shout, sing, give us facts & figures but we're going to urbanize the City of Abbotsford OUR way." According to Ms. Power, "Councilors defended their position two ways. First, the proposal conforms to



the Official Community Plan (OCP) and second it is private property and must be developed... yet that same Council, on the very same day, gave the thumbs up to the Vedder Mountain Proposal which does not conform to the OCP, nor is it recommended by City Planning Staff".

West Coast Environmental Law provides some clarity on what OCPs really mean. "While an Official Community Plan is a bylaw, and does have some legal effect, the courts have interpreted OCPs as generally being intended to inform, rather than bind, local government decisions. While it is true that Council can and should consider the Official Community Plan in making zoning decisions, the OCP, as drafted, does not bind Council...and it would be perfectly legitimate to decline to rezone the property, for example, because of local community concern, to address environmental concerns or for any number of other public policy reasons." (letter to Abbotsford Council, WCEL June 21/10).

When OCPs are used correctly, there can be orderly, balanced, well planned development and avoidance of urban sprawl. Using the OCP to develop lands, despite citizens' concerns or environmental impacts, flies in the face of social and environmental sustainability and reveals a lack of understanding of the intent and value of the document.

Tracy Lyster
CAUSS

Justice for Wild Salmon



As summer continues, so do the threats to wild salmon stocks on the Fraser River. This October 25th, the Cohen Commission will open in Vancouver for the evidential hearings and months will be spent trying to understand the cycles of Fraser River salmon and why a predicted 10 million sockeye salmon did not return in 2009. It is now 2010 and there is a predicted return of 12 million. Yet these predictions are based on the same technologies used for previous predictions. So what happened?

Hundreds of concerns have been submitted to the Cohen Commission as the Honorable Judge Bruce Cohen and a team of scientists try to determine just that. Meanwhile, any person even remotely connected to the cycles of life and nature could tell you that after years of sensitive habitat being exploited and destroyed, you can be certain that there will be a repercussion. What we are not asking, what we should be asking, is, why have salmon runs gone from over 92 million in the early 1900's to 12 million in a so called good year? Think how different things would be if Fraser River runs were still a healthy 92 million plus. First Nations would not be told by DFO that they cannot fish. Bears would be down by the river eating salmon, not in town foraging for trash and getting shot for it. Ecosystems would be flourishing from the nutrients salmon provide. Fishermen would not be selling their boats due to a lack of fish.

Have wild salmon been taken for granted?

The Stave River (prior to being dammed) was also once a river that salmon swam up by the millions. When the dam was built in the early 1900's, millions of salmon threw their bodies upon the concrete wall, determined to continue the cycle of life that is so essential to so many other living beings. Documented accounts of that time say that the witnesses were overwhelmed by this spectacle, and the smell of burning salmon lingered for days as they tried to dispose of the millions of corpses. This is a story that can be heard on many rivers. Add to that the stories of Independent Power Projects (i.e. river diversions), industrial agriculture, industrial development, road construction, gravel dredging gone wrong, chemical spills, and the impacts of salmon farms on migratory routes, and one wonders, just what will the outcome of the Cohen Commission be? How has it been allowed to get to this point? Wild salmon are so much more than a 'sustainable resource' as deemed by the government. The survival of healthy wild salmon stocks is indicative of human responsibility and respect for what has been deemed the backbone of the B.C. Coast, not to mention the survival of First Nations culture that has depended on salmon for generation upon generation.

No one can say what will come of the Cohen Inquiry

into the disappearance of the Fraser River Sockeye, but one thing is certain; we cannot stand by and allow the wild salmon to go the way of the buffalo. This is not a time to be apathetic and hope that "those in charge" will make things right. We must all recognize our roles as stewards of this earth and do all we can to ensure that wild salmon survive.

May 8th of this year saw over 6000 people stand together before Parliament for wild salmon. Some media sources reported only 1000. It is a challenge to know what the facts are when the media that we trust for news gives inaccurate accounts of what's going on.

On October 25th, thousands of people will gather at Vanier Park in Vancouver. Wild salmon advocates from First Nations along the Fraser River and along the B.C. Coast will lead a march to the law courts where the Cohen Commission will open, and deliver the message that we the people are standing up for wild salmon and demanding that they are a priority above and beyond all that threaten their survival.

This will be a time for anyone who wants salmon to remain a part of who we are to let their voice be heard, their presence be known. It will be a time for all personal differences to be put aside as we join together as one voice that clearly says, "Wild Salmon First!"

In the days leading up to the march, there will be a paddle down the Fraser River beginning in Hope. Members of First Nations bands from all over, along with many others, will paddle along the very river that the salmon travel. As they make their way towards Vancouver, there will be overnight stops along the way where evening ceremonies will be held to honor the spirit of the salmon. All are welcome to come to these ceremonies and share or just listen.

For details visit www.salmonaresacred.org or email; dstaniford@puresalmon.org or oceananele@hotmail.com

Elena Edwards, Mission

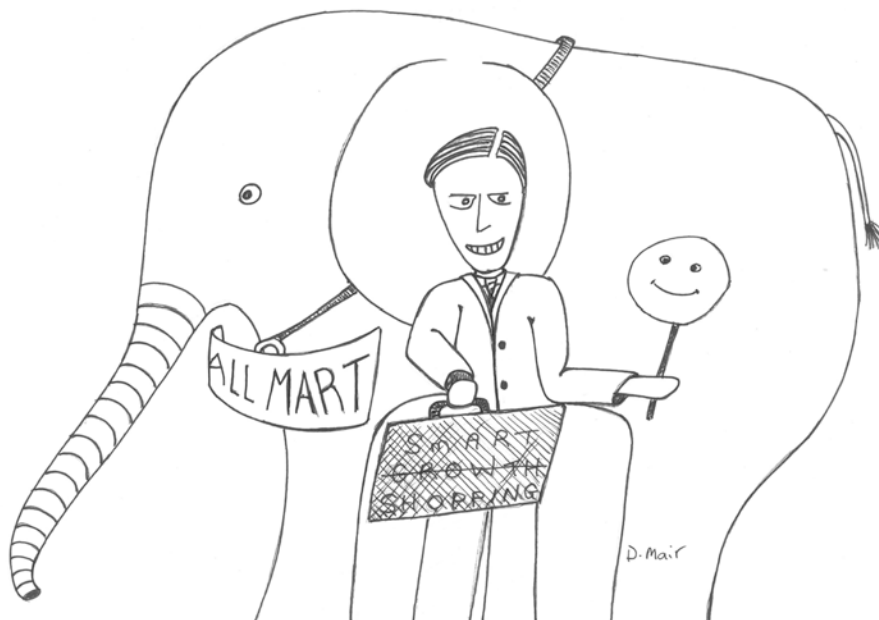


An event not to be missed

The Traveling World Community Film Festival is coming to Mission Oct.1-3.

For details on the film line-up and advance ticket sales, please visit missionfilmfestival.ca

"IS WAL-MART COMING TO MISSION?"



Our council flies on high hopes and thin air.



Silverhill resident **Thomas O'Beirne** celebrates winning Mission's Freeman of the City with members of CAUSS and family.

Dr. Marvin Rosenau



Dr. Marvin Rosenau has been awarded the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Roland Michener Conservation Award for his conservation work. The award recognizes an individual who "has demonstrated a commitment to conservation through responsible activities that promote, enhance and further the conservation of Canada's natural resources."



END NOTES from page 8

1 Quoted by David M. Schaepe, "Activities on the Land: Continuing Traditions in a Shifting Legal World." Page 122 in A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas. Keith Thor Carlson, editor; Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, cultural advisor; Jan Perrier, graphic artist and illustrator; with a foreword by Xelixweltel, the Honourable Steven L. Point. Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre [and] Chilliwack, Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001.

2 David J. Connell, "On the Challenge of Creating Sustainable Food Systems (Comments)." *Environments* 36, 1 (August 2008).

3 The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was formed in 1973." Retrieved July 31, 2010 from http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/Community_need_and_the_ALR_legal_review.pdf

4 "A proclamation of February 14, 1859 declared all lands other than town-sites, mineral claims or government reserves would be sold from time to time by auction and at other time by contract for the upset price of ten shillings per acre, half cash and the balance in two year." Page 186 in John Edgar Gibbard's *Early History of the Fraser Valley: 1808-1885*. By John Edgar Gibbard. Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1937. Unpublished M.A. Thesis.

5 commons: "land owned or used by all the inhabitants of a place; tract of open public land, esp. as a park in a city or town" Retrieved July 31, 2010 from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/common>

6 page 108 in A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas.

7 Ibid

THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

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