Fish versus Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River

Matthew Evenden

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 336 pp. Maps, illus. US$65.00 cloth.

By Joseph E. Taylor III
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In circles where salmon management gets debated, the Fraser River looms large because it helps drive a neat syllogism, which goes something like this: Columbia River runs imploded because American scientists supported a massive dam-building program and then failed to offset losses through an equally massive hatchery system; Fraser River runs are vibrant because science helped to rebuild degraded habitat and then protected fish from similar dam and hatchery programs; therefore Canadian salmon management was enlightened and US policies were not. Unfortunately for people who like this just-so story, Matthew Evenden's *Fish versus Power* undermines the separation of Canadian and American in the history of salmon and river management. No tidy boundaries remain but, rather, messy intellectual, material, and political relationships that leave readers with abiding and, perhaps, depressing respect for the contingencies of the past.

Although salmon frame the questions the author pursues, they have only a marginal presence in this book. The title says *Fish*, but the book's primary focus is "the institutional and political contexts of scientific knowledge" (12). Evenden's targets are the broad framework within which policies were formed, and the result is a narrative with a sort of tectonic quality about it. Steeped in primary documents produced by governments, quasi-governments, and corporations, Evenden produces a sort of Weberian morality play. Public and private organizations rise, thrive, vie, and fall. Bureaucracies take on lives of their own, and original missions morph in distressing and bizarre ways. Salmon often get lost in the shuffle as entities maneuver for power or profit or fame or god-knows-what. In the end salmon survive, but this is not a success story.

Evenden draws out these lessons early with a sophisticated analysis of the confusions surrounding efforts to help salmon pass Hell's Gate. The Gate, a notorious narrows on the Fraser, was made far more turbulent after a series of railroad-induced landslides from 1911 to 1913. The river bed was so altered that adult salmon could not pass, and lucrative sockeye runs crashed. Nearly all understood that a catastrophe had occurred, but it took years to comprehend the full impact, decades to realize that problems were festering, and nearly a half century to muster the knowledge and will to fix things. Evenden's careful reading of the science and engineering behind this project, however, reveals how tenuous a solution it was. Good-intentioned scientists descend into nasty, nationalistic spats, and, as Milo Bell later admitted, if anyone had understood how little was known about Hell's Gate, they "might not have given us authorization to build [a fish ladder]" (236).

The remainder of the book concentrates on efforts to develop hy-

droelectricity on the Fraser. Like its neighbours to the north and south, British Columbia was blessed with vast latent hydraulic energy and cursed by limited demand. This frustrating blend of contingencies vexed developers during the early twentieth century, but whereas American boosters had willing and powerful allies in the federal government, in British Columbia federal and provincial forces were often at odds over funding public projects, and private utilities added capacity only after demand emerged. Ironically, BC Electric was a saving grace for Fraser salmon because it would not risk capital on a mainstem dam without an obvious energy market.

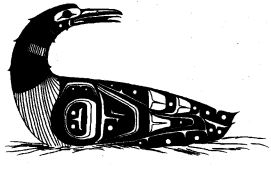
A conservative strategy served BC Electric well in the Great Depression, but a rush of industrial development during the Second World War resulted in chronic brownouts and calls for a more anticipatory approach to power development. The pressures that transformed the Pacific Northwest in the 1920s and 1930s finally reshaped British Columbia in the postwar years. Unlike south of the 49th parallel, however, industry and government could never align behind a dam-building program. Politicians cajoled BC Electric to move forward on projects, but the company's main goal was to deflect efforts to make it a public utility. The Aluminum Company of Canada (ALCAN) diverted the Nechako River to power a smelter at Kitimat, in part by playing the Nechako off the Chilko River as the lesser of two evils, but ALCAN's victory created a potent coalition of industry, management, and science concerned about salmon habitat. Electric policy produced a Newtonian dynamic. Each new project inspired an equal and opposite reaction. The province's fractured industrial base prevented that coalition of cities, industry, and bureaucracy which drove dam-building in the Pacific Northwest.

Running through this book is an attention to transnational themes. Nature, ideas, and policies transgressed borders and made it impossible to understand events within a provincial or national framework. Salmon migrations entangled fishers in messy treaties; floods triggered major changes in dam politics on the Fraser and the Columbia. An international assemblage of scientists and engineers at Hell's Gate engaged each other so intensively that calling their work "Canadian" or "American" obscured the inherent dynamism. The most significant implication of transnationalism was the formation of hydroelectric policy. Well-placed boosters lobbied to dam the Fraser and even divert the Columbia into the Thompson River, but they were opposed by adamant salmon interests. Industrial forces were evenly matched, but this only forestalled the Fraser's fate. Although General Andrew McNaughton insisted that more dams would enable BC to be "entirely masters of our own destiny" (223), he miscalculated the entangling alliances. Diplomacy and technology made the Fraser irrelevant in 1961 when Canada and the US agreed to dam the upper Columbia so that both American river management and Canadian economic concerns were addressed. Meanwhile engineers perfected long-distance power transmission, ensuring that dams on the Columbia and Peace rivers could substitute for the Fraser.

In the end the Fraser, an almost completely provincial river, remained damless because of the transnational nature of Columbia waters and electrical transmission. This is why facile contrasts between Canadian and American management fare poorly, and why the transnational focus is impera-

tive. Evenden's arguments are deft, but he could push them further. The floods that were exploited by Fraser advocates were also seized upon by American boosters. A discussion of the different contexts in which these visions played out would underscore the importance of provincial political and economic contexts. Conversely, Evenden's treatment of the impact of the ALCAN project on the Cheslatta T'en is important, but this was anything but an isolated incident. Attention to the regional impact of dams on Native peoples would underscore how tales about salmon expand our understanding of modernity and colonialism. The bias toward the impact of dams on salmon habitat did deflect fish research from concerns about the ocean, but earlier research had bared thorny regulatory issues no government wanted to address, and key oceanographic problems had to await satellite technology.

Fish versus Power is very good history, but it contains a chastening conclusion. British Columbians spared Fraser salmon not because they had great empathy for nature, but because their electrical demands increased only after technological innovations enabled them to exploit the already-devastated Columbia and soon-to-be devastated Peace. This is not the sort of tale that makes readers proud - the just-so stories are much more effective on that score - but this is why Matthew Evenden's book is so important. It reminds us that the frontiers more often constrain our ability to understand and that novel spatial constructs can create original and needed insights into the past and present.



Plants of Haida Gwaii
Nancy J. Turner

Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2004.
264 pp. Illus. $38.95 cloth.

By Douglas Deur
University of Washington

For those scholars conducting research within First Nations communities at this postcolonial moment in academic history, old rules do not apply. One must navigate a rearranged landscape made up of new challenges and opportunities. First Nations have both the desire and the ability to restrict researchers' access: they may actively seek to shape both the methods by which research is to be conducted and the manner and degree to which their intellectual property will be manifested in published form. Moreover, many First Nations seek a greater and co-equal role in the academic enterprise, with Aboriginal cultural specialists shaping research goals and questions; unprecedented collaborative research opportunities emerge that, when all runs smoothly, unite indigenous cultural specialists with outside researchers in the production of new and more culturally nuanced genres of academic discourse. Outside researchers must devote unprecedented attention to developing relationships of mutual trust within the communities they study. Research "for research's sake" is seldom admissible, and one must demonstrate convincingly, to an audience jaded by decades of perceived academic misrepresentation, that one's work will lead, for example, to the settlement of land or resource claims, the improvement of community health, or the preservation and perpetuation of cultural knowledge in the face of considerable pressures to the contrary.

BC researchers, seeking models that might help them to navigate this rearranged academic landscape, would benefit greatly from an investigation of the works of Nancy Turner. For over three decades Turner has been in the forefront of developments in collaborative research with First Nations, producing a corpus of ethnobotanical works that is recognized internationally for its detail and its sensitivity to cultural concerns.

In many ways her most recent book, *Plants of Haida Gwaii*, represents the culmination of lessons learned by Dr. Turner in the course of the last three decades and is an effective response to the emergent academic paradigm. A casual skim of this book might lead some readers to assume that it is merely another guide to plants used by an Aboriginal group: the book is beautifully illustrated with colour photos of plants and people as well as paintings by Haida artist Gíitsxaa, and it lists species after species of plants that have been used traditionally for their berries, shoots, leaves, woods, or other products. Such "plant guides" are often associated with the popular literature regarding Aboriginal peoples – literature commonly fashioned into paperback guidebooks of mixed merit that provide brisk sales at tourist shops throughout the province. Yet Dr. Turner's works stand apart. As the preface and introduction make clear, this volume represents the outcome of decades of earnest discussions between Turner and the Haida community regarding not only the traditional use of plants but also the role of the researcher in the transmission of cultural knowledge today as well as the competing imperatives for disclosure and privacy that characterize contemporary First Nations research.

Beginning in 1971, very early in her academic career, Turner made her first research trip to Haida Gwaii, initiating her ethnographic research of Haida plant use and a meticulous review of archival materials on Haida culture. Since then she has continued to visit and revisit this unique place, documenting and participating in Haida plant use traditions that, for a time, seemed to be slipping away. Haida elders, wishing to have their knowledge passed on to later generations, eagerly invited Turner into their homes and out to their families' plant gathering sites, providing the information and perspectives that shaped this impressive, long-term documentation effort.

What Turner has produced with the guidance of these elders is a document that speaks, arguably by design, to two audiences. For contemporary Haida, this volume is a resource of tremendous pedagogic value, providing a detailed chapter of almost forty pages entitled "The Role of Plants in Haida Culture" as well as over 130 pages of information on the traditional uses of particular plant species within the traditional diet, toolkit, and pharmacopoeia of the Haida people. This information provides ample confirmation – one might even say celebration – of the detail and sophistication of traditional Haida plant knowledge in a format that quotes Haida elders at length, provides abundant illustrations, and is attuned to the cultural milieu of the modern Haida; to wit, the volume is an outstanding teaching tool within the Haida community and will long serve the purpose that its elders intended. The perpetuation of dietary and medicinal practices and the continued attachment to places of plant procurement will, in the view of many First Nations elders, provide for the health and cohesion of their descendants far into the future. Long after they are gone, the elders will continue to "speak" to young Haida through the works compiled by Dr. Turner.

Yet clearly this document was designed to speak to outsiders as well. While not provided with intimate details of ceremonial or medicinal plant uses, outside audiences are presented with sufficient information to glimpse the cultural, ceremonial, dietary, and economic importance of plants among the Haida. We, too, are invited to learn from the elders of Haida Gwaii regarding the uses of the myriad plants of the BC coast so that we might also share in this region's bounty. More to the point, however, this book fosters an empathetic appreciation of both Haida culture and the plants on which the Haida have depended since time immemorial. While the book is remarkably thin in explicit political commentary or in discussion of recent land and resource conflicts in Haida Gwaii, it conveys Haida perspectives on these matters, both explicitly and implicitly. These perspectives are perhaps best summarized in the book's brief epilogue, written by K'ii7lljuus (Barbara Wilson): "Elders teach that respect and thanks for all things are a must. If we do not respect, give thanks and protect these plants – the life-giving travelers that share our journey – they will not be there for us" (217).

As this volume clearly indicates, plants and other non-commercial natural resources are necessary for the survival of the people of Haida Gwaii, individually and collectively, yet forces outside of this archipelago have dramatic impacts on these resources. Logging, overfishing, the spread of introduced species, and many other environmental impacts great and small thus result, indirectly but inexorably, in a cascade of adverse cultural consequences. By gaining an empathetic understanding of Haida land and resource ethics, it is implied, outsiders might be compelled to work in concert with the Haida to protect both the plants and the cultural practices that depend on them. Turner's work ensures that this message, embodied in a compelling collage of images of the land and quotations from the elders, will reach a broad audience. No doubt the long-term research relationship between Nancy Turner and the Haida will continue to yield dividends, for both academic researchers and First Nations communities, for many years to come.

Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists and Visionaries Changed the World
Rex Weyler

Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004. 600 pp. Illus. $39.95 cloth.

By Michael M'Gonigle
University of Victoria

Vancouver in the early 1970s was a far different place from the "world class" cosmopolis it is today. Home to "draft dodgers" and a Kitsilano counterculture, it was an open space for environmental action, like a green field before the grass got all trampled down. This is the setting for the birth of Greenpeace, recounted in Rex Weyler's exciting new book entitled *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists and Visionaries Changed the World.*

The book recounts how the now global organization got started – from the founding of the Greenpeace predecessor (the Don't Make a Wave Committee) in 1969 and the initial campaign (in 1971) of the *Greenpeace I* to Amchitka Island to protest American nuclear testing, through campaigns to save the whales and seals, to the creation of Greenpeace International in 1979. It hosts an engrossing cast of characters,

with early leading roles assigned to the American Quaker anti-nuclear movement (Jim and Marie Bohlen, Irving and Dorothy Stowe) and Canadian journalism (Ben Metcalfe and Bob Hunter). Throughout there is a chorus of characters from the Vancouver area, such as skipper John Cormack, ecologist Pat Moore, hard-core activist Paul Watson, inveterate organizer Rod Marining, and deal-maker David McTaggart.

Greenpeace is truly a rich achievement. It tells a great story that captures the spirit of a generation and a movement and that begins and ends with a lamentation on the birth of Greenpeace International. This provides the book with its purpose – to reclaim Greenpeace as a product of these amazing individuals in this special city at this historic time.

The dust-jacket promotes the book as the "definitive" record of Greenpeace "portrayed by someone who helped make it happen." To academics, this is a contradiction, of course. Such a work is necessarily "perspectival" rather than "definitive." Indeed, rather than closing the book on Greenpeace, this story is an important contribution to an ongoing understanding of the organization and of the movement of which it was such a central part.

Wyler was a war resister from Colorado who joined Greenpeace in 1973 as photographer and, later, became publisher of the magazine *Greenpeace Chronicles*. His methodology falls somewhere between that of an ethnographic study and that of a historical novel. Huge amounts of primary research (interviews, documents, notebooks) are translated into direct (constructed) dialogue. The story is recounted in present time, with hindsight mixed in.

Under the influence of its founders, the brilliance of Greenpeace in the 1970s involved its strategy of (1) "bearing witness" (Quaker roots) through non-violent direct action and of (2) conveying the dramatic, derring-do images to the world through the visual media (journalistic roots). In Bob Hunter's memorable term, the goal was to send out media "mindbombs." With homage to Marshall McLuhan, Greenpeace recognized the constitutive role of "discourse" and harnessed its material power long before such awareness penetrated the academy.

At the same time, Wyler does not contemplate the limitations of the mindbomb strategy in an already corporate-controlled media and an evolving culture of entertainment and consumption. The organization's lack of interest in grinding, less glamorous political work is also eschewed: "Our job was not to resolve the nuance of ecology. Our job was to expose ecology by delivering images to people's minds. 'Let the scientists and politicians sort out what to do,' Hunter often said" (501). For example, although Greenpeace was represented at the International Whaling Commission after 1977, that story (which led to a pelagic moratorium in the summer of 1979) is not told.

The book begins and ends within a perspective set by Greenpeace Vancouver. Those individuals and offices who challenged Vancouver's continuing intellectual, financial, and legal hegemony are repeatedly criticized (McTaggart, John Frizell, Greenpeace in San Francisco and Europe) or given slight treatment (Allan Thornton). In contrast, the heavy-handed centralism of Greenpeace Vancouver's president in the late 1970s, Pat Moore, is politely excused as insufficiently "diplomatic." To move from a local movement to a global organization presented immense challenges. The conflict created by this shift is recounted, but a more nuanced and reflective treatment is still needed. It is needed in order to assess events in

light of the changing characteristics of global civil society, the realpolitik of global political ecology, and the imperatives of transnational organization that began to emerge in this period.

Those heretics who fought for a vision that might work in the 1980s and beyond – and who, it might be argued, saved Greenpeace from 1970s Vancouver – are neither acknowledged nor yet understood. Yet, notes Wyler, "our private fears about letting go would prove trifling ... Over the ensuing decades, the mystical spirit and radial theatrics would survive a burgeoning bureaucracy required to operate the global organization" (571).

If this statement runs counter to the book's argument, then so much the better for researchers in future. None of it detracts from Wyler's remarkable contribution to the understanding of BC history and of the global environmental movement.

Your Land and Mine: Evolution of a Conservationist

Edgar Wayburn
with Allison Alsup

San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2004. 336 pp. Illus. US$35.00 cloth.

By Mark Harvey
North Dakota State University

Within the last two decades, several scholars have written about a number of the leading conservation activists who appeared in the United States and Canada in the crucial decades following the Second World War. Thanks to insightful biographies of Sigurd Olson, Ernest Oberholtzer, and Aldo Leopold, as well as collections of their writings and those of their colleagues, the lives of key figures in the postwar era have been ably chronicled. Edgar Wayburn, a leading figure in the Sierra Club for more than four decades, has now added his story to the mix with an engagingly readable memoir entitled *Your Land and Mine.* Working closely with his wife, Peggy, Wayburn offers a chronicle of their life's work as wilderness activists.

Wayburn begins by recalling his move to San Francisco as a young medical doctor in the 1930s, his courtship and marriage to Peggy in 1947, and their early "high trips" into the Sierra Nevada. Ed Wayburn worked his way into the high ranks of the Sierra Club, serving on the executive committee of the San Francisco Bay chapter in the late 1940s, gaining a seat on the board of directors in 1957, and winning his first presidency of the organization in 1961. In the decade and a half after the end of the Second World War, the Wayburns shared the anxieties of many within the Sierra Club over sprawling subdivisions on undeveloped land near San Francisco, and they helped spearhead campaigns to save Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Wayburn ably narrates these campaigns, along with the bigger ones over dams in Dinosaur National Monument – dams which the Sierra Club helped thwart – and the battle over the California redwoods.

For those familiar with the Sierra Club's history or with environmental politics in the 1950s and 1960s, Wayburn's book covers much familiar ground. He offers capsule histories of the Sierra Club's debates over a proposed nuclear facility at Diablo Canyon on the California coast as well as nicely drawn vignettes of the conflicts over Point Reyes, the redwoods, and the Bureau of Reclamation's plans to dam the Grand Canyon. He recounts the great internal struggle within the

club over David Brower's leadership, a struggle that led to his resignation as executive director in 1969. Wayburn provides character sketches of Ansel Adams, Martin Litton, August Fruge, and Michael McCloskey, though naturally he keeps himself at the centre of the story.

Wayburn's approach to *Your Land and Mine*, which involves blending evocative descriptions of the lands he loves with crisply drawn vignettes of the main players in many of the battles, makes for a compelling read. He draws illuminating portraits of important players in the postwar battles: of Newton Drury, the conservative director of the Save-the-Redwoods League; of the even more conservative California governor Ronald Reagan, who, in a conversation with Wayburn, denied that he ever said "When you've seen one redwood, you've seen them all" (154); and of former United States interior secretary Stewart Udall. In his early tenure as secretary, Udall won plaudits from Wayburn and other conservationists; later, however, when Udall had an apparent change of heart regarding the redwoods, Wayburn experienced "the biggest disillusionment in my conservation career" (149).

Nearly half of this book centres on Alaska, which, by the late 1960s, increasingly consumed the Wayburns' energy and time. The "great land" inspired Ed and Peggy as no other wilderness areas in the lower forty-eight ever had, and they eagerly returned frequently to explore Alaska's wilds by raft, float plane, bush plane, train, and on foot. Wayburn makes clear the valuable role of grassroots activists such as Celia Hunter and Ginny Wood, owners of Camp Denali near Mount McKinley National Park, who were energetic in protecting the park from miners and other interests. He then traces the lengthy political effort to save Alaska's wild lands and to pass the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 1971, as well as the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, 1980.

Wayburn does not much concern himself with recent debates about the social constructions of wilderness; instead, he simply states his own love for and convictions regarding the value of wilderness. Anyone interested in the main outlines of the conservation movement in recent decades should find *Your Land and Mine* of interest. Readers will also be reminded of the pronounced moral commitment that bound together the generation of conservation and wilderness activists in the decades after the Second World War.

Fire: A Brief History

Stephen J. Pyne

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002. 204 pp. Illus. US$18.95 paper.

Wildfire Wars: Frontline Stories of BC's Worst Forest Fires

Keith Keller

Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 2002. 296 pp. Illus. $34.95 cloth.

By Carla M. Burton and Nancy J. Turner
University of Victoria

Here are two books about fire: both histories and both well-researched and insightful, but both completely different in scope and content. Stephen Pyne's book, *Fire: A Brief History*, presents a long-term history of fire from an ecological and cultural perspective. The book covers a vast temporal and geographical scale, measured in epochs and millennia,

and traversing the entire globe. Keith Keller's book, *Wildfire Wars*, in contrast, details the human and environmental elements of ten of the most horrific forest fires that have occurred in recent times in British Columbia, dating over a span of decades, from 1931 to 1998.

Pyne defines three distinct "Fires" in the earth's history. The First Fire is the natural fire – sparked by lightning and other natural phenomena that began probably in the early Devonian, some 400 million years ago, when biomass began to accumulate and dry to the point that it would burn. It has shaped the evolution of species and the formation of many different habitats, including those used by humans since their beginnings. The Second Fire is anthropogenic: it came about when humans learned to capture, kindle, and control their own fires, using the fuels of their environments. These two Fires co-existed and intermingled with each other until the last part of the Holocene – namely, the time of the Industrial Revolution. Then the Third Fire – potentially the most destructive – was born, with the discovery of vast deposits of fossil biomass: coal, oil, and gas, a hydrocarbon legacy that accumulated from long-ago photosynthesis of the Carboniferous and Mesozoic conifers, ferns, equisetums, and other vegetation. Some of these plants burned in the First Fire, but most of them fell, decayed, and became compressed and converted into the fossil fuels we now depend upon so heavily. According to Pyne, "Humans have exhumed fossil biomass and are burning it on such an immense scale that combustion and fire regimes now extend across geological time. What failed to burn in the old Earth is burning in the modern" (14).

Pyne is a world authority on the history of fire. He writes with passion, energy, and imaginative inquiry, and with an academic scrutiny as sharp as a knife. Keller, on the other hand, captures the drama of firefighting and the heroism of individuals in a personal, journalistic style, using archival sources, newspaper accounts, and interviews with those who were there to tell his stories. Pyne's book presents a compelling account of how fire evolved along with humankind and the ways in which humans have harnessed it to their advantage. Fire has been the major ecosystem-level management tool for food production, assisting humans in the tasks of clearing forests, creating and maintaining grasslands for animal forage, breaking down organic materials, reducing pests, and promoting the vigorous resprouting and productivity of certain fire-adapted berry species and other food plants. Even the Third Fire – industrial fire – has provided us with tremendous energy to run our machines and engines, build our modern cities and global transportation systems, and operate our agricultural equipment, enabling us to farm on massive scales. The Third Fire comes with an enormous price, however, with the consequences of its harnessing ranging from pollution of groundwater, ocean, and atmosphere to global climate change due to excessive production of the so-called "greenhouse gases": water vapour (H_2O), carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and ozone (O_3). These are produced naturally, but burning from the Third Fire has added significantly to their levels.

Keller's book may not be so thought-provoking intellectually as Pyne's, but it has more of a personal touch, being strongly rooted in the day-by-day and even hour-by-hour accounts of specific wildfires, told through the descriptions and words of those who lived through them. His documentation for each event was gleaned through archival research (newspaper reports and photographs), interviews with

firefighters, and anecdotal recollections of landowners. He reports on the McKinney Fire of 1931 near Oliver, the great Vancouver Island fire of 1938, the 1960 Midday Fire near Merritt, the 1967 Hound Fire near Lumby, the infamous Invermere Fires of 1985, and the Silver Creek Fire near Salmon Arm in 1998. (This last fire prompted Premier Glen Clark to declare British Columbia's first "state of emergency.") Keller also chronicles some major fires in the northern part of the province: the 1971 Tee Fire near Liard Hot Springs, the 1982 explosive Eg Fire along the Liard River, the 1983 Swiss Fire near Houston, and the Red Deer Creek Fire of 1987. Prior to 1960, since the northern part of the province was largely inaccessible to logging, little economic value was attached to the forests. Forest fires, even when detected, were frequently ignored. However, as northern timber stands have become accessible and hence of economic value, increasing attention has been paid to controlling them.

In these ten narratives Keller focuses on the awful, destructive powers of the fires, vividly painting the human struggles to control forces far beyond the ken of most of us. He introduces the reader to the individuals who battled the blazes from every level, from the top brass of the Forest Ministry to those who dropped into the fire zone – some who risked their lives in heroic acts, others who simply survived through chance or fate. Inevitably, government bureaucracy, personality clashes, and conflicting approaches in the forest industry complicated many of these situations. Keller also traces, through these stories, the development of fire detection and firefighting technologies, from the use of bulldozers ("cats") to create firebreaks to the aerial application of fire retardants and the use of airborne "Rapattack" crews to stop a fire before it can spread. In fact, one of the most important developments in the fight against forest fires was the use of air support. By the late 1950s Stearman crop-dusting biplanes were in wide use, and, according to BC Forest Service employee John Weinard, they were effective "if you could get two or three working together on a smallish fire" (77). However, since many fires were not "smallish," planes with more water-carrying capacity were clearly needed. By 1959 Dan McIvor had negotiated the purchase of four Martin Mars flying boats, which were being sold as scrap by the US Navy. These four planes formed the backbone of a new business, Forest Industries Flying Tankers Limited. Two of the original Martin Mars planes are still in use today, based out of Sproat Lake on Vancouver Island. As well, helicopters are now widely used for reconnaissance and for dropping water at strategic points.

For those who have lived in or near British Columbia in the summers of 2003 and 2004, Keller's accounts may seem both dated and prophetic. Horrendous as the fires described in the book were, the fires of these past two years have been some of the worst on record in terms of the resources required to control them and the number of people directly affected by them. Yet all major fires or fire years seem to have their own superlatives – in area burned, erratic behaviour, dollars spent, or number of homes lost. Even though the fires of 2003 and 2004 are not described in Keller's book, it provides the opportunity to compare, from many perspectives, our most recent forest fires with his historical accounts of earlier remarkable fires.

It is notable that, in terms of firefighting techniques and equipment and the selection and training of fire crews, things have changed little. Each fire has evoked similar responses from fire bosses, fire crews, the government, fire victims, the media, and the

general public. Fire bosses have always had to find firefighters and firefighting equipment and convince government bureaucrats and the general public that their firefighting strategies were sound. Firefighters have always faced smoke, heat, exhaustion, and life-threatening situations, resulting, sadly, in some fatalities. Unlike their predecessors, however, firefighters in the last two decades have been mostly professionals who have been rigorously trained before going out on a fire. In the early days of firefighting, people were conscripted, or "blue-slipped," on the spot to fight fires, some against their will. Today's firefighters are also more fortunate in that many of their counterparts in the 1930s were never paid for their work.

The government has always been faced with how to allocate funds to fight forest fires, pay firefighters, and provide support to the victims of the fire. The homeowners who lost property in 2003 were more fortunate than were those in the McKinney Fire of 1931, who received no public compensation for their losses. At that time the Forest Branch's mandate "required it to protect crown timber, not private property" (28). The media have always reported fires in an exciting manner, providing the public with human interest stories, spectacular photography, and eye-catching headlines. In 1938 journalist "Torchy" Anderson of the *Vancouver Daily Province* described the demise of Forbes Landing Hotel forty-eight hours before it actually burned. Sixty-five years later the *Vancouver Province* sensationalized the fires around Kelowna by reporting stories from what they called "Ground Zero." The general public has always responded to these stories with excitement and enthusiasm.

Although these two books differ in approach and scope, there is an area of convergence. Keller's fires were started in various ways, with causes ranging from "unknown" to arson, careless camping, sparks from logging equipment, and lightning. In all cases, however, the initial flame spread rapidly due to extended periods of hot dry weather; high fuel loads from logging slash, deadfalls, or fire suppression; and high winds that fanned the flames. As documented by Pyne, in the past across North America (and in many other parts of the world) indigenous peoples burned over certain landscapes periodically, usually in fall or spring, maintaining more open habitats with less undergrowth and "fuel load" to burn during the dry season. These human-lit fires (Second Fire), as well as lightning-ignited fires (First Fire), would burn themselves out without human intervention, effectively reducing the probability of setting off enormous and hot-burning wildfires such as those described by Keller. Indigenous forest ecologist Dennis Martinez has termed the kind of fires kindled by indigenous peoples to clear out the underbrush as "cool fires," in contrast to the hot-burning, crown-destroying fires of Keller's narratives. European newcomers, land managers, and forest service personnel did not appreciate the benefits of the low-level fires ignited by indigenous peoples.

By the early twentieth century, officials had imposed strict sanctions against intentional indigenous burning and had actively suppressed forest fires of all kinds. In British Columbia and elsewhere, people who tried to burn over areas the way their ancestors did were threatened with imprisonment. By the time forest ecologists began to appreciate that some ecosystems – even forest ecosystems – respond well to certain levels of fire disturbance, and may even *require* periodic fires to maintain themselves, the widespread suppression of fire had created very different forest structures.

In a section entitled "Lost Contact: When Fire Departs," in his second chapter, Pyne describes an outcome of years of fire suppression in the Yellowstone region. Informed by forest ecologists, the US National Park Service reformed its fire policy in 1967-68 with a decision to follow, under an approved set of circumstances, a "let-it-burn" policy in the event of fire ignition. Yellowstone was one of the national parks affected by this new policy, and in 1972 park managers proposed a new program in which natural fires could run their course over large areas of the park. This program was revised but not fully in place when major fires struck in the summer of 1988. After decades of active fire suppression, including the elimination of Aboriginal burning practices, the Yellowstone forests were quite unlike their earlier configurations. There had been a build-up of branches and fallen trees – fuel load – so that when fires started and were allowed to burn as part of the new policy, they burned fiercely and persistently, with far more destructive force than anticipated. These were not the "cool fires" of bygone days. That summer, about 45 percent of the park was burned, with a total of thirty-one fires. There was enormous publicity, with debates about what should have been done and much hindsight interpretation.

Pyne points to the complexities behind these fires. Yellowstone, he maintains, was being maintained as a natural ecosystem when, in fact, it had been, through and through, an anthropogenic landscape shaped by earlier humans as well as by nature. He describes the probable original landscape, in which indigenous peoples' fires would have played a large role: "Those fires had likely been thick as mushrooms – fires kindled to drive animals, prune berries, and scour openings; signal fires, camp fires, smudge fires that typically litter aboriginal landscapes and that can, during times of drought, romp over large landscapes" (43). Pyne asks the question, which needs to be considered by many, including British Columbia land managers: "To what extent must even natural reserves include human behaviour?" (43).

Keller's epilogue rounds out his book and links it nicely to Pyne's as it questions the necessity of fighting all forest fires. Clearly, there are developed areas where forest fires will always need to be suppressed because they threaten human lives and property, but the cost of such suppression is increased vigilance and management of fuel accumulation. As scientific research becomes part of the public domain, there is an increasing awareness that forests are more than just trees and that fires are an integral part of maintaining healthy forest ecosystems. Thus many fires should just be left to burn. However, despite our knowledge of forest ecology, and even though today's firefighters have at their disposal improved predictive powers of fire behaviour and improved techniques for controlling and fighting fires, the decision as to whether a particular forest fire should be allowed to burn or should be suppressed is never an easy one to make.

Both of these books are informative and thought-provoking. Both are well written, well organized, and readable. We recommend both to *BC Studies* readers and other scholars, ecologists, foresters, fire scientists, land managers, those concerned with ecological and ecocultural restoration, and the general public.

Making Waves: The Origins and Future of Greenpeace
Jim Bohlen

Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001. 181 pp. Illus. $19.99 paper.

Shadow Warrior: The Autobiography of David McTaggart, Founder of Greenpeace International
David McTaggart

London: Orion Books, 2002. 260 pp. Illus. £18.99 (UK) cloth.

Seal Wars: Twenty-five Years on the Front Lines with the Harp Seals
Paul Watson

Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2002. 320 pp. Illus. $32.95 cloth.

The Greenpeace to Amchitka: An Environmental Odyssey
Robert Hunter

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004. 239 pp. Illus. $24.95 paper.

By Arn Keeling
University of Saskatchewan

Google "Greenpeace" and you get a snapshot of the global scope of environmental activism undertaken by that organization. On any given day, group members can be found saving jaguars in Argentina, blockading logging in Alaska, opposing drag-line fisheries off New Zealand, sailing to confront fish farms in British Columbia's Broughton Archipelago, protesting mining developments in the Urals, or testing human hair for traces of mercury in Pittsburgh.

Greenpeace, to the delight of many and to the chagrin of some activists, has become the international brand-name for environmentalism. Its origins in Vancouver and its growth into a global entity are swathed in myth and not a little controversy. The four books reviewed here offer quixotic views of the founding of Greenpeace from those involved in the front lines of the group's early campaigns. They resound with interpersonal rivalries, clashing egos, and personal agendas. While offering interesting accounts of famous environmental encounters, these memoirs are by and large as unreflective as their authors seem to be, and insights into the significance of the rise of Greenpeace remain largely hidden between the lines.

Bob Hunter's journal of the inaugural Greenpeace direct action campaign in 1971 remained buried for thirty years prior to its recent publication as *The Greenpeace to Amchitka*. The rambling narrative was initially rejected by publishers, although portions surfaced in a 1972 photo-essay and a later Hunter book about Greenpeace, *Warriors of the Rainbow* (1974). Its re-emergence provides an engaging and imaginative – if at times bizarre – account of the voyage that established the radical reputation of a new brand of eco-warriors. In 1971 Hunter, then a columnist for the *Vancouver Sun*, and eleven others chartered a halibut packer (renamed the *Greenpeace*) from Vancouver to interfere with American nuclear testing in the North Pacific. While failing to stop the test, the journey attracted international attention and sowed the seeds for the formation of the Greenpeace Foundation. The crew included many who would go on to shape Greenpeace in its critical early years, including activist-ecologist Patrick Moore, itinerant journalist Ben Metcalfe, and anti-nuclear activist Jim Bohlen.

Hunter's account sparkles with hippie-era imagery and detailed personal observations reflecting the spirit – and tribulations – of that first voyage. His inimitable prose includes repeated references to the Lord of the Rings books, with the (mostly) Canadian crew cast as Hobbits sailing towards an American Mordor. Crammed aboard the converted fishing boat was an uneasy alliance of "mystics" and "mechanics"; the motivations and methods of the former were shaped by the counterculture and sixties-era radicalism, while the latter, including the older members of the crew, possessed a "straighter" vision of the trip's purpose and tactics. Hunter traces the emerging schism within the ranks, one deepened by confrontations with the US Coast Guard and by the repeated delays of the test, which, ultimately, forced the *Greenpeace* to return to Vancouver. At the time, Hunter agonized over what he regarded as the mechanics' failure of nerve, though in a retrospective note at the end of the book he acknowledges that they were probably wise to turn back when they did.

Chief among the mechanics was Jim Bohlen, a Sierra Club member and anti-nuclear activist who co-founded the Don't Make a Wave Committee (the precursor to Greenpeace) to oppose the Amchitka test. As he notes in his memoir, *Making Waves,* the New York-born Bohlen moved to Vancouver in 1967 to protect his sons from military service. In his recent study of Greenpeace, Frank Zelko has documented how Bohlen, along with fellow expatriates Irving and Dorothy Stowe, brought a significant American influence to the Canadian activist community.[1] Early Greenpeace actions were thus steeped in the Quaker activist tradition of "bearing witness" and were infused with American pacifist and anti-nuclear ideals. Bohlen's version of the Amchitka voyage, however, offers little reflection on his role or his relationships with other crew members.

Bohlen is most notable as a representative of the technophilic tradition within environmentalism. A research engineer by trade, he became increasingly fascinated with "appropriate technology." From geodesic domes (Bohlen was an acquaintance of dome guru Buckminster Fuller) to energy-efficient wood stoves to organic farming, the appropriate technology and back-to-the-land movements stressed human-scale and earth-friendly technology and self-sufficiency as an antidote to environmental crisis. Bohlen, who retired to a Greenpeace demonstration farm on Denman Island, became a leading Canadian proponent of alternative technology and a Green Party activist. He returned to Greenpeace leadership in the 1980s as a member of the Greenpeace Canada board of directors and spearheaded the group's attempts to net the US cruise missile being tested in northern Canada in 1985. While its final chapter offers some reflections on the contemporary ecological challenges facing the planet, the book fails to assess the historical importance and meaning of Greenpeace and environmentalism.

In contrast with Bohlen's straightahead style, the memoirs of Greenpeace activists David McTaggart and Paul Watson bristle with self-aggrandizement and mythologizing. Co-founders of Greenpeace International in 1979, McTaggart and Watson became larger-than-life figures within the environmental movement, both for their swashbuckling confrontations with environmental evil-doers and for their egocentric personalities (characteristics amply displayed in these volumes).

[1] Frank Zelko, "'Make it a Green Peace': The History of an International Environmental Organization" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2003).

McTaggart's *Shadow Warrior* was published shortly after his fatal car accident near his olive farm in Italy. McTaggart's personal story is fascinating, and he unapologetically recounts his privileged upbringing in Vancouver, his wild youth, and his repeated personal crises. His involvement with Greenpeace stemmed more from his desire for adventure and risk than from a deep commitment to environmental causes. Yet his take-no-prisoners style helped define the organization's direct action tactics, beginning with his maritime disruption of French atmospheric nuclear tests in the South Pacific in 1972 and 1973. The difficult voyages and his confrontations with French officials confirmed McTaggart's – and Greenpeace's – reputation for fearless, dramatic exploits.

Egocentric and a self-confessed manipulator, McTaggart at times resembles a ruthless corporate CEO more than an environmentalist. He appears to have treated relationships, both personal and professional, as means to an end, whether that end be the success of Greenpeace actions or the satisfaction of his own desires. In the memoir he expends considerable effort to position himself as the driving force behind Greenpeace International (which he headed for nearly twelve years) and its successful early campaigns against whaling and nuclear testing. Written much as McTaggart lived – in a blaze of action with few pauses for reflection – this memoir, like Bohlen's, will appeal most to movement insiders and those who study environmentalism.

Anti-sealing activist Paul Watson shares much with McTaggart. Watson also subordinates all relationships to his ongoing personal crusade: ending the international seal hunt. *Seal Wars* recounts Watson's efforts to halt sealing in the North Atlantic, including his many confrontations with Newfoundlanders and French-Canadian sealers (who are largely portrayed as semi-literate savages). People are divided into heroes (Watson, of course, and fellow activist Walrus Oakenbough [David Garrick]) and villains (Greenpeace rival Patrick Moore, federal fisheries officials). Much of the dialogue sounds contrived, and entire sections appear to be reproductions of Hunter's *Warriors of the Rainbow* and Watson's own *Ocean Warrior* (1994). As such, *Seal Wars* contributes little insight into either Greenpeace or the environmental movement, except as they affected Watson's own struggle.

Whatever one thinks of sealing or Watson's campaigns, the book contains remarkable narratives of high-seas derring-do, bloody battles on the North Atlantic ice, and Watson's (dare I say?) heroic attempts to save doe-eyed seal pups from slaughter. The politics and science of seal hunting and protection remain obscure. Watson, like Bohlen, is perhaps most notable as an avatar of a particular strain of environmentalism – the animal rights movement. He is a true believer in the value of animals (well, seals at least) as individuals and rejects anthropocentric arguments defending the hunt.

Read together, the memoirs of Hunter, Watson, and McTaggart, in particular, offer a vista into the ideology of "first-wave" environmental activism. These "muscular" environmentalists believed their radical actions could change the world, and they saw Greenpeace as their vehicle. They evaluated other people and events in relation to their revolutionary goals. This is particularly evident in their relationships with women. The masculinist world of high-stakes environmental activism had little place for women as anything other than helpmates or sexual partners. Watson and McTaggart especially appeared to see women as activist accesso-

ries: Watson, for instance, dismisses an early lover by noting, "she chose people and I chose Earth" (84), and McTaggart was a serial philanderer who left behind abandoned children and ruined relationships in his environmentalist zeal. While women occasionally participate in these male-dominated campaigns, rarely do they penetrate the inner circle of male activists.

None of these books by itself provides much information for those interested in the growth of Greenpeace as an organization or in the social phenomenon of environmentalism. For these questions, readers would do well to consult Frank Zelko's "Make It a Green Peace"[2] or Rex Weyler's recent book, also reviewed in this issue. These memoirs will, however, fuel the ongoing myth-making and controversy that surrounds the organization and its larger-than-life builders.

Regulating Eden: The Nature of Order in North American Parks

Joe Hermer

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. 150 pp. Illus. $45.00 cloth, $17.95 paper.

By James Murton
University of British Columbia

In "Yellowstone at 125," the new preface to his classic *National Parks: The American Experience* (1997), Alfred Runte despairs that Yellowstone's function as a "sanctuary" has been shattered by "a million cars and the drone of a hundred thousand snowmobiles" (xii). Joe Hermer might agree. But while scholars such as Runte assessed parks for how well they lived up to the high ideal of nature preservation, Hermer's *Regulating Eden* assesses, as do other recent works such as Alan MacEachern's *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada* (2001), the nature and existence of the ideal. Hermer argues that parks are less about ecology than about creating a pleasing experience of nature, a Disneyland wilderness containing all the thrills with none of the risks. Further, he suggests that the extensive regulatory framework necessary to bring this representation of nature into being threatens both the environment and society at large.

Regulating Eden rests on a theoretically informed reading of the various documents that create the state of "emparkment" – parks legislation and regulations, staff handbooks, pamphlets, promotional material, maps, and signs. Parks, Hermer argues, impose a heavy-handed system of moral order in the name of preventing environmental damage and preserving the peace and harmony visitors look for in nature. In doing so, parks suggest that regulation of one's individual moral behaviour – being respectful of both human and non-human neighbours – is enough to solve environmental problems.

Regulating Eden is most effective in its careful delineation of the way regulations create the experience of park-going. The typical meandering park trail, Hermer shows in a fascinating discussion, is designed to detailed guidelines. Its wood-chip surface hides the extent to which it has been used, thus suggesting that such use is consistent with nature preservation. It appears aimless and so natural, while bringing users to selected sites where carefully placed signs explain what they are seeing. Its apparent aimlessness suggests the possibility of getting lost, so adding an element of risk and thus a sense of the wild. Yet the trail, like the park, is actually encrusted with regulations designed to minimize risk

[2] Ibid.

to nature and to other users. Signs and park rangers order users to stay on the trail and dictate where users are to go and how they are to behave once off the trail. This strategy of controlled risk, for Hermer, is central to emparkment. In making this argument, Hermer draws on primary sources from 37 US states and eight Canadian provinces and territories, as well as Parks Canada. Oddly, the US National Park Service, guardian of such places as Yellowstone and Yosemite, gets only minimal attention. The book is notable for the effective use of images as evidence.

However, somewhat like the park trail, Hermer's book is not particularly easy to get through. The opening chapter's literature review is impressive, but ultimately somewhat dizzying, in its scope. The book is heavily laden with theory, which too often clogs up the prose. For instance, Hermer consistently refers to park signage as "official graffiti," but never explains the explanatory power of the term over the word "sign." Use of evidence is also, at times, problematic, Hermer seemingly drawing more from his evidence than it can support. For example, noting that parks establish boundaries between different use-specific areas, he argues that these boundaries "construct park visitors as transient subjects that pass through the ostensibly wild landscape of the park that is represented as being permanent" (61). While it is clear how designating certain areas as, say, marshland, can give the environment a spurious sense of permanence, it was not clear to me how it necessarily makes park visitors into transient subjects.

Hermer's most interesting and most important conclusion also demonstrates the shortcomings of his reliance on textual readings for evidence. Hermer notes that parks, as sites of nature preservation, are popularly understood as examples of society at its most selfless. As bearers of this utopian image, they are potentially dangerous for society at large, legitimizing both parks' heavy-handed moral order and their equation of moral order with environmental protection. This is exciting stuff, suggesting that the study of parks is important even for those who might have little to no interest in parks or environmental issues. Yet without proof that visitors really are carrying these messages out of the parks with them, a directly opposed argument is equally plausible – that, as shining jewels, parks have little to tell us about the sordid complexities of everyday life.

Though other scholars have pointed out how social concerns shape parks, Hermer's relentless peeling away of the layers of park regulation exposes the quite astounding extent to which parks depend on careful ordering of humanity and nature in order to create a desired experience of freedom and individual communion with the wild. For scholars interested in questions of parks, wilderness, or the relationship between the environment and society, Hermer raises important issues and concerns, while his analysis raises stimulating new possibilities for further research and study.

Unnatural Law: Rethinking Canadian Environmental Law and Policy

David R. Boyd

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003.
488 pp. $85.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

By Jeremy Rayner
Malaspina University College

For several decades now, Canada has presented itself to the world as a country in the forefront of environ-

mental stewardship and responsibility. The sheer size of our country, its relatively low population density, and the unsuitability of so much of the land for agriculture have combined to produce a popular image of pristine lakes and endless forests that can still be supported by adventurous photo-journalists and is sold at home and abroad as the official image of Canada. The reality, however, is rather different. In *Unnatural Law*, David Boyd joins his voice to a growing chorus of alarm about Canada's "Potemkin village" approach to environmental law and policy. It is not necessary to press very far behind the glossy façade of official pronouncements to encounter a shocking record of failure and neglect that has seen Canadian environmental performance slip further and further behind the standards set by other wealthy countries in the world. And there is growing resentment of our hypocrisy in international environmental forums, as we continue to lecture everyone else on environmental responsibility while taking so little upon ourselves.

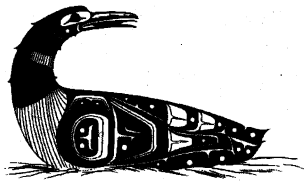
In the first and best part of his book, Boyd presents the evidence of our decline. He notes the findings of a recent University of Victoria study showing Canada ranking second to last (ahead only of the Americans) across a variety of environmental performance indicators compared with 28 other OECD countries. We waste water, pollute the soil and atmosphere, and guzzle non-renewable energy with such profligacy that it's a mercy there are only 30 million or so of us. He proceeds to analyze the problems in a series of chapters on water, air, land, and biodiversity that provide an exceptionally useful *tour d'horizon* of the state of contemporary environmental law and policy in Canada, rounded out with well-chosen case studies of particular industries and issues. These sections, which take up rather more than half the book, can be unreservedly recommended as a reliable and up-to-date introduction to the subject, supported by a solid bibliography of current sources. Boyd does not shirk the major problem of writing about Canadian environment policy – the fact that so much of it is actually made by the provinces – and demonstrates an encyclopaedic knowledge of provincial policies and issues that is a corrective to the customary focus on the activities of the federal government.

The two remaining sections, which Boyd calls "diagnosis" and "prescription," are rather less satisfactory. Boyd is an environmental lawyer by profession and the book is dedicated to a clutch of other lawyers, including the doyen of the BC environmental bar, Thomas Berger, who provides a characteristic foreword. In spite of dutifully repeating the awkward phrase "environmental law and policy" throughout, it's clear that Boyd's focus is on law rather than policy. His prescription amounts to a plea for more regulation expressed in clear, non-discretionary statutes to be enforced by a corps of legal activists with appropriate access to information and standing in the courts. They will be supported by sympathetic judges interpreting constitutionally entrenched environmental rights.

Legalism is certainly not the direction being taken in most of the countries that Boyd purports to admire and it sits uneasily with his interesting discussion of the non-regulatory approaches of countries like Sweden, which is singled out as a suitable comparison for Canada. There we learn that Swedish water use is reduced by full-cost pricing, air pollution by a "fee-bate" system, and greenhouse gas emissions by energy taxes – all market instruments rather than legal ones. Similarly, his discussion of the vexed question of how to reduce consumption

in the face of our deeply entrenched beliefs about individual rights and lifestyle choices begins from the sensible premise of the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy that "it is much more likely that ten thousand small decisions, freely made each day, will sustain development than will the One Big Law flowing from government" (313). There follows an all-too-short discussion of subsidies, perverse and virtuous incentives, and the relation of environmentally destructive behaviour to underlying issues of social justice, all of which merit much more serious and extended treatment than they receive here.

Of course there is a place for legal regulation in a sensible environmental policy. Market instruments, information, and education usually need to be supported by a framework of law that will punish non-compliance and will embody, rather than contradict, key principles like full-cost pricing and polluter pays. But, if we have learned anything from the last twenty years of policy failure, it is that electorates in wealthy democracies are unwilling to pay for the expensive apparatus of compliance and enforcement that reliance on regulation as a front-line environmental policy instrument requires. They are also increasingly willing and able to evade restrictions on what they see as their sovereign right to choose for themselves. In the end, Boyd's prescription is a curiously old-fashioned one, running against the trend of the leaders in environmental policy in favour of the legalistic culture of that perennial laggard south of our border.



Taking Stands: Gender and the Sustainability of Rural Communities

Maureen G. Reed

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003. 296 pp. $85.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

By Karena Shaw
University of Victoria

Maureen Reed's book, *Taking Stands: Gender and the Sustainability of Rural Communities*, tackles a crucial but almost systematically neglected tangle of issues embedded in the conflicts over forestry in BC: those emerging from and through the lives of women living in forestry-dependent communities. It is an ambitious book, both conceptually and substantively, characterized by a systematic effort to disrupt inherited assumptions – whether of policymakers, researchers, or activists – about the meaning and motivation of women's activism on North Vancouver Island during the early and mid-nineties, persuasively arguing that these assumptions conceal realities that must be understood in order to move these communities towards sustainability. Grounded in a rich understanding of the diverse and complex realities of these women's lives, Reed provides a nuanced reading of both the processes through which these realities have been erased or ignored and the necessity of revealing and engaging them in both research on and policy towards sustainability in these communities.

After a context-setting introduction, the book proceeds through an analysis of the contribution of the "greening" of public discourse to dynamics of social marginalization in rural resource-dependent communities. It then moves on to examine the policy changes that have

influenced structural change in these communities. The subsequent three chapters draw most directly on the research into women's lives, detailing the activities pursued by these women, the contexts in which they chose their actions, and the meanings they gave to them. In the process, the social dynamics of these rural communities begin to emerge with rare detail and nuance. The final two chapters build on the rich picture that has been painted to explore how policymaking in these regions has failed to engage this richness, and thus has tended to ignore crucial aspects of social sustainability. The book concludes with a consideration of how research agendas might be framed more effectively to better inform future policymaking towards the social sustainability of rural communities.

Taking Stands makes important contributions to a range of literatures and offers much to a range of readers: researchers interested in dynamics of gender and sustainability, or indeed in the character and implications of past forestry conflicts in BC; policymakers or analysts concerned to better respond to the challenges posed by gender, in both the content and process of policymaking; activists seeking to craft more wide-ranging coalitions to move communities towards sustainability and students of all of the above. This diversity of resources provided by the book also reveals its potential weakness, however. The individual chapters are each well researched, grounded, and argued; each develops a focused and discrete analytical territory and pursues this territory with considerable intricacy. The obvious reluctance to allow any thread of the analysis to slip, or to oversimplify any aspect of the terrain, is admirable and works well at a chapter level. However, integrating this level of detail and complexity into an overarching analysis is a challenge, and although most of the chapters could stand alone, at times the coherence and consistency of the overall argument suffers. This problem becomes apparent in the juxtaposition of the analyses in different chapters. While the rise of environmentalism figures heavily as a causal factor in the analysis of transition and social marginalization of forest-dependent communities in Chapter 2, for example (and the role of government policies is virtually absent), the subsequent chapter details a range of government policies that arguably have much greater consequences for the character of the transition faced by these communities, yet little mention is made of their contributions to social marginalization. As a consequence, despite Reed's efforts to resist "blaming" environmentalism for the social marginalization of these communities, the analysis lends itself to that kind of scapegoating. The contributions of government policies, unions, and forestry companies to processes of social marginalization are never systematically analyzed, and so they escape blameless, an eerily familiar repetition of how anti-environmental rhetoric diverted blame from them during the conflicts as well. The overall argument suffers from similar failures to sustain a consistent analytical framework throughout, itself at least partially a consequence of the attention to detail and context that simultaneously provides the core strength of many of the chapters.

This concern should not overshadow the very important contributions of the book, however. It tackles highly politicized issues from a far-too-long obscured perspective, negotiating the charged terrain that results with attentiveness and care. It is generally accessible, and provides those of us teaching and researching in this area with a resource, reference point, and series of important challenges. Reed sets a high

standard for her own research, and the results will help many of us who seek to engage more effectively with similar terrain.

Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest

Russell Link

Seattle and London: University of Washington Press in association with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2004. 350 pp. Maps, illus. $26.95 paper.

By Lillian Ford
California Coastal Commission

The popularity of wildlife, as idea and as icon, is near universal, but the presence of wildlife in our yards, homes, and neighbourhoods provokes reactions as diverse as the species that we encounter and the places in which we find them. Responses spring from a variety of viewpoints: the Jane Goodalls among us (and within us) welcome opportunities to commune with fellow species, and the Elmer Fudds set up their traps. Misinformation abounds, and questions loom: What is the place of wildlife in our lives? How do we attract wild creatures while preserving their ecological integrity? How can we coexist with wildlife while protecting public health and safety? Or, simply, how do we get those bats out of the attic? Russell Link's new book, *Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*, has information for everyone whose lives or research include these kinds of questions.

Packed with practical information for both attracting and excluding animals in rural, suburban, and urban environments, *Living with Wildlife* includes chapters on sixty-eight types of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians that inhabit British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. Each chapter contains a concise package of information, starting with a physical description and natural history, and followed by a more detailed section on the animal's feeding habits, reproductive behaviour, mortality, denning, nesting and roosting sites, tracks, signs, calls, and use of the built environment. Prioritizing a positive perspective on wildlife encounters, each chapter discusses the animal's beneficial characteristics and provides advice on viewing and attracting it before discussing conflicts and their prevention. Each chapter ends with information on public health concerns and the legal status of the animal under state, federal, and provincial jurisdictions. The volume also includes several appendices, offering technical specifications for devices discussed in the text, detailed information on trapping wildlife and evicting them from buildings, advice on hiring a wildlife damage control company, a discussion of the impacts of cats and dogs on wildlife, and lists of local agencies and resources that can provide further information.

Much of the text is presented in sidebars, boxes, or in a bulleted format, making the information easy to read and to dissect. Excellent illustrations bring the animals to life and detail techniques for providing habitat enhancements (such as feeders, roosting sites, and nest boxes) as well as various barriers, scare devices, traps, and structural reinforcements designed to keep unwanted animals away. The lively format successfully integrates the variety of information contained in each chapter.

Link is an urban wildlife biologist for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and he has a

background in both wildlife biology and landscape architecture. Link's experience in responding to wildlife complaints is evident in the book's exhaustive inventory of conflict prevention methods, and his horticultural knowledge provides inventive landscape solutions for both attracting and discouraging wildlife. His extensive knowledge of regional wildlife, encompassing biology, ecology, history, and conservation, adds context and dimension to the text, making *Living with Wildlife* a resource for anyone exploring wildlife-related issues.

Link's approach to human-wildlife conflicts is progressive and constructive. He emphasizes prevention of conflicts and attributes most problems to human activities that unintentionally provide food, shelter, or other attractions for unwanted animals. Link explores a variety of control methods, discussing the drawbacks of many traditional techniques while demonstrating the effectiveness of humane and ecological solutions. This approach seems just right for our times, when attitudes towards wildlife encounters are diverse but trending towards tolerance.

Other regional publications (including Link's *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*) have addressed wildlife-friendly landscaping, natural history, and other wildlife-related subjects. *Living with Wildlife,* however, is the first to combine such a wide range of topics in a single volume. Despite its encyclopaedic scope, the book has gaps, particularly regarding less common species. For instance, the chapter on hawks focuses on just three of the thirteen species of hawk found in this region, and it discusses peregrine falcons – one of the more fascinating species to take up urban life – only briefly. Nonetheless, given the enormous scope of his task, Link does a tremendous job of distilling the most important information and presenting it in a highly accessible format. The result is a valuable reference for those seeking to understand, and to act upon, the ways that wild animals inhabit the places that we call home.

A Passion for Wildlife: The History of the Canadian Wildlife Service

J. Alexander Burnett

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003. 346 pp. $85.00 cloth, $27.95 paper.

Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940

George Colpitts

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002. 216 pp. $75.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

By Darcy Ingram
McGill University

It's been slow going for environmental history in Canada, British Columbia included. Not that the environment doesn't figure prominently in national and regional literatures; in fact, it looms large in Canadian historiography. Much of this work, though, approaches the non-human world indirectly, leaving Canadian environmental historians to turn for inspiration to the large body of American environmental literature. Colpitts's *Game in the Garden* and Burnett's *A Passion for Wildlife* will help to change this. Their shared focus on wildlife in Canada – Colpitts on western Canada from the fur trade to the Second World War, Burnett on the Canadian Wildlife Service (cws) from the Second World War on – alternately bring region and nation into focus as

they explore continuity and change in the relationships between human and non-human animals.

Both Colpitts and Burnett are conscious of the footsteps in which they follow, in particular those of Janet Foster, whose 1978 text *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada* set the tone for work on wildlife in Canada. That said, Foster's emphasis on the role of federal civil servants in the development of national wildlife policies in Canada highlights the lines that divide the two. Whereas Burnett picks up the threads of Foster's text to offer a fiftieth-anniversary history of civil servants' work with wildlife at the national level, Colpitts favours the local and regional over Foster's institutional and federal overview.

In fact, Burnett follows the scope and content of *Working for Wildlife* so closely that he opens himself to the same critique levelled at Foster: that the narrow and somewhat celebratory focus on civil servants and federal institutions passes too easily over the broader historical context. To dwell on this, though, would be to criticize Burnett for what he has not done, and at 331 pages *A Passion for Wildlife* does a lot. Using government documents and oral sources, including more than 120 interviews, Burnett sets out "to outline the broad themes and activities of CWS to date and to capture, in a few highlighted examples, the passion to comprehend and conserve wildlife that has motivated most, if not all, of the men and women who have worked there" (288).

In particular, it is this "passionate commitment" that *A Passion for Wildlife* exposes (288). Combining brief five-year summaries with longer thematic chapters, Burnett outlines the expansion of the CWS from early enforcement and management duties into research and communications as "the enormous task of discovering and describing the natural resources of the second largest country in the world" (90) shifted "from a concentration on selected species to habitat conservation and the preservation of biodiversity" (291). Beginning with the CWS's work with birds, mammals, and fish, Burnett goes on to explore projects related to habitat, communications, toxicology, endangered species, and governance. This pattern of increasing complexity mirrors both the evolution of the CWS and the views of the Canadian public, which, Burnett argues, by the 1990s "had all but abandoned the historical view of wildlife as a resource for hunters and anglers" in light of a new set of environmental attitudes related to concerns such as "air quality, pollution, climate change, and endangered species" (254).

The devotion and intimacy displayed by CWS employees in their work is particularly striking in accounts of field research, as in the case of one researcher who found himself applying artificial respiration for hours to an over-tranquilized polar bear (by lifting the bear's fur to collapse and expand its lungs) (114-15) or the three decades' devotion of another to heron preservation (230-6). It is through this kind of dedication, found repeatedly among CWS employees and expressed at local, national, and international levels, that Burnett challenges the "unflattering assumption among many Canadians that theirs is a bland country" (295). "On the contrary," he argues, "few nations in the twentieth century have been more ready to embrace largeness of vision in the definition and stewardship of their identity and heritage, or to take bold intellectual risks in the process" (ibid.).

By contrast, Colpitts's focus on western Canada emphasizes social and environmental dynamics over the national dynamics that have

shaped human attitudes and practices regarding wildlife. Working with a range of archival materials, including newspapers, corporate and government sources, and the premise that "'wild' animals are appreciated differently according to historical circumstances" (4), Colpitts sets out "to identify early ideas about wild animals and a wider western context of hunting, conservation, and preservation history" (11) and, in turn, to identify their relationship to modernity and, in particular, to a "Romantic legacy" that redefined the natural world and the animals that inhabited it (7). In doing this, he effectively maps the interpretive and material transformations regarding wildlife that occurred as the commercial and subsistence hunt of the fur trade gave way to agricultural settlement, sports hunting, and tourism in a west that succeeded in linking British Columbia and the Prairie provinces.

From these contexts some striking observations emerge. Regarding the fur trade, Colpitts's emphasis on the exchange of meat rather than fur broadens the picture of social and material relations as European traders facing periodic food shortages worked to establish supplies through long-distance supply, hunting, and, more important, food exchanges that brought them further into relations of dependency with their Aboriginal counterparts. Likewise, wildlife gained significant and multiple meanings with regard to agriculture. Read as a sign of the region's productivity and the extent of its northern agricultural limits, the west's superabundant wildlife population was simultaneously interpreted as a phenomenon that was to pass as the western wilderness gave way to a new, progressive agricultural order. Such perspectives did not always fit with the experiences of early settlers, who continued to find wild game a necessary supplement to farming. As a result, conservation measures in the west differed significantly from those found in central and eastern Canada, where an international clientele of sports hunters worked to shut down subsistence and commercial use of game. In western Canada the commercial trade in wild meat continued to play an important role in the western diet well into the twentieth century. When conservation, preservation, and sports hunting did become issues of concern, Colpitts argues, respondents sought not only to curtail the destruction of game but also to retain local control of shrinking wildlife resources.

If *Game in the Garden* has a weakness, it is its brief handling of the larger conceptual apparatus it employs. Colpitts argues persuasively that the division between "wild" and "domesticated" animals continues to hinder the spread of ecologically based interpretive models, but his exploration of such slippery terms as "modernity" and "Romanticism" would benefit from further elaboration. Likewise, his assertion that the problems westerners and others face regarding wildlife rest not in shortfalls regarding conservation strategies but, rather, "in trying to move the human mind beyond the dated conception of wildlife as a resource to be 'managed,' 'husbanded,' 'harvested,' or preserved'" (13) is difficult to entertain without some assistance, given the current material relationship of humans to these creatures and their habitats and in light of the stress he places on the relationship between ideas and their material contexts.

Finally, do these works tell us anything about British Columbia? Obviously, Colpitts's "unapologetically anthropocentric" focus speaks more closely to questions of ethnicity, culture, region, and environment in the west than does Burnett's national and institutional focus (11). Yet Burnett's

study, too, helps to place British Columbia both within a national wildlife strategy with international implications and within a regional context where local social and environmental factors display contours of their own. Given the relatively untapped fields they explore, these works should be of interest not only to those pursuing the history of wildlife in Canada but also to anyone trying to make sense of the past as it relates to conservation, preservation, and environmental concerns in northern North America.

From a Victorian Garden: Creating the Romance of a Bygone Age Right in Your Own Backyard

Michael Weishan and Cristina Roig; colour photography by Susan Seubert

New York: Viking Studio, 2004. 143 pp. Illus. US$32.95 cloth.

By Brenda Peterson
University of British Columbia

Gardens are ephemeral, constantly changing and easily lost after only a few years of neglect. The Point Ellice House in Victoria, British Columbia, is an exceptional historic site where the gardens, with original plantings now over 120 years old, have been successfully recreated.

Using the story of, and remarkable documentary evidence available for, the Point Ellice House and gardens, *From a Victorian Garden* paints a detailed portrait of a Victorian garden and provides readers with practical information for creating a period garden.

Housing one of the richest collections of Victoriana in western Canada, the Point Ellice estate of the O'Reilly family provides a glimpse into the life of well-to-do settlers living in Victoria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Original furnishings, wallpaper (with spare rolls), books, magazines, clothes, personal letters, garden journals, photographs, receipts, plant lists, and annotated seed catalogues are among the 15,000 plus items left in the home.

In 1867 Peter and Caroline O'Reilly bought Point Ellice House, which was constructed around 1861. The house remained in the immediate family until 1974, when the government of British Columbia purchased it as a historic site.

With the assistance of garden historians, professional archaeologists, and the wealth of archival information left in the house, the curators of the Point Ellice estate have undertaken the recreation of the gardens, which is the main focus of this book. The gardens played a central role in the life of the O'Reilly family. They were a venue for playing sports such as croquet and lawn tennis, and for entertaining guests during the summer months (in 1886 the O'Reillys hosted a high tea for Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and his wife). The kitchen garden provided fresh vegetables and fruit for the family, and cut flowers for decoration of the house interior.

The authors make excellent use of excerpts from the detailed archival records of the O'Reilly family. Letters between husband and wife, diaries, plant lists, and, most important, historic photographs illustrate the story of how the gardens were cultivated and used by their owners. The book highlights the influence of popular British garden writers on the design of this colonial garden, including the use of hardscape and the selection of plants. The text is rich with extensive quotations from Victorian garden books.

The main author, Michael Weishan, is host of the American television program *The Victory Garden*, which has over two million viewers each week. He is a garden designer, specializing in period gardens, and lives in an 1852 farmhouse west of Boston. He is also gardening editor for *Country Living* magazine, where his monthly column, "Your Garden," is read by over eight million subscribers. This is his second book on historic gardens; Ballantine published his first book, *The New Traditional Garden*, in 1999. Given Weishan's large audience, staff at Point Ellice House should brace themselves for a surge of new visitors.

While this is primarily a book for gardeners, with most of the text devoted to practical, how-to information, I recommend it for anyone with an interest in the social history of Victoria. The creative layout of the book, illustrations, photographs, and presentation of historical information are excellent. I do have a few complaints. The poor choice of italic font for the quotations from letters and journals makes for difficult reading; and careless copy editing resulted in some errors. For example, James Douglas is called John Douglas, Sir John A. Macdonald's last name is spelled "McDonald," Kootenay is spelled "Keetnay," and some dates are off by a year or two. I was also disappointed by the absence of a list of the O'Reillys' gardening books found in the house.

On my first visit to Point Ellice House many years ago, garden historians were just beginning the enormous task of restoring the gardens. After clearing a section in the north part of the grounds, their efforts were immediately rewarded by the sprouting of hollyhock seeds, which had been lying dormant in the soil for almost sixty years. With seeds purchased at the house, I now have direct descendants of the Point Ellice hollyhocks growing in my Kitsilano garden.

The restoration of the gardens at Point Ellice House is a work in progress, and I look forward to following the ongoing development of this great Victorian treasure.

Natural Light: Visions of British Columbia

David Nunuk

Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 2003. 128 pp. Illus. $49.95 cloth.

By Mollie Ralston
Vancouver

This coffee table book is a jewel of photographs captured by the author after long hours of waiting for "*the* moment" or when he just happened to see light and colours juxtaposed perfectly. The accompanying text shows an appreciation of spaces as well as an engaging personal touch. As one who loves the many faceted views of BC and the expanses offered by its varied outlooks, my only criticism is that David Nanuk has chosen well-known areas such as the Queen Charlotte Islands and the West Coast Trail, and though picturing them in a hitherto unseen light, has neglected lesser-known sections of the province. There is nothing from the northwest quarter of BC, for example, which in itself has many spectacular photographic possibilities. What about the Edziza volcanic formations or the magnificent canyon of the Stikine River, to mention only two sites in that area?

But the author has no doubt realized that all of BC cannot be fitted into one book and so has chosen his personal best instances of natural light. In that respect, the photographs very much appeal to one's sense of beauty and colour and leave us in awe of the majesty and diversity of BC.