



WILD TIMES

Winter 14/15



Garth Lenz / ILCP

THE FLATHEAD VALLEY: CONNECT IT, PROTECT IT

There is an extraordinary valley in southeastern BC. An undeveloped valley with pure water and a variety of carnivores unmatched in North America. A valley as rich in wildlife as the Serengeti Plain of Africa and a crucial link for animals moving north and south from the Rocky Mountains in Montana to Canadian parks like Banff and Jasper.

Welcome to the Flathead River Valley—a very special place. A place that remains unprotected.

In 1932, when Canada and the U.S. created the transboundary Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, there was a piece in British Columbia left out: the Flathead. Wildsight is working with other conservation groups, industry and First Nations to make sure this critical area is protected and connected to important wildlife habitat on both sides of the border.

This summer, we made some important strides. Led by Kaslo's Dr. Cori Lausen, we held the very first Flathead Bat BioBlitz. Dr. Lausen and her

nocturnal team of bat biologists and citizen scientists found a total of seven species of bats, including two endangered species that have been decimated across Canada by white nose syndrome. Read the full report and watch a short film on our website: wildsight.ca/bats.

Our water team put on their hip waders to monitor the Flathead River, joining in four decades of intensive academic study that has established the Flathead as an international benchmark for pure water. Using CABIN, a protocol developed by Environment Canada, we are assessing stream health by measuring invertebrate diversity. This summer, we also played a key role in advising Teck on a 7,150 hectare land purchase in the region. The land will be dedicated to conservation.

Together with industry, First Nations and local communities, we will continue working hard to protect this important place. A place for bears, for bats and for fish. A place for future generations to experience the vastness of the wild.



First light on the Jumbo Valley, Howard Smith, phototide.com

JUMBO WILD FOREVER: THE UNSTOPPABLE JIM GALLOWAY

Jim Galloway is no stranger to cold nights in his camper, long days of rain, mornings of snow and dinners cooked over a campfire. This year, this dedicated 81-year-old spent 42 days at the Jumbo Wild monitoring camp. But you don't have to spend very long with Jim to feel his passion and his commitment to protect the Jumbo Valley from the development of a large four-season ski resort.

Jumbo, a critical habitat for grizzly bear populations and a place of spiritual importance for the Ktunaxa people is also a beloved local wilderness area, admired for its beauty and ecological integrity.

“IT’S ABOUT STICKING THROUGH THICK AND THIN,” JIM SAYS. “WE HAVEN’T GIVEN UP YET AND WE’RE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP NOW.”

Jim first got involved with the Jumbo Wild campaign 21 years ago. He says that at first he sat back and did nothing but that as he saw other people making commitments and sacrifices, he became inspired to act. He says, “It’s very important that we preserve big areas of wildlife habitat. Environmentalism is just as important as finding new oil wells.”

Forty-two days is a long time to sleep in a camper at the end of a logging road. When asked what kept him going, Jim spoke of how important it was for him when new people came to the monitoring camp with their fresh energy. He mentioned several visits that were especially inspiring, including a visit by two fellows from the West Kootenay who came in with a truck and some tools to build the camp a kitchen.

“At about the age of 40,” Jim said, “I started to realize that we are abusing our planet terribly. Something had to be done about it. I wanted to contribute as much as I could to help people realize that we’ve got to look after our planet. After all, it’s the only one we’ve got.”



Dedicated volunteers kept the Jumbo monitoring camp running through rain and snow for 57 days this year.



VOCAL AND UNITED FOR CHANGE: A VICTORY FOR BC FORESTS

In 2014, Wildsight supporters sent a total of 8,000 emails to federal, provincial, and municipal governments, weighing in on important environmental issues.

We asked you to speak up and your voices were loud and strong. You stood up to protect our parks from mining and drilling, protect our pollinators from pesticides, defend the Agricultural Land Reserve, keep the Jumbo Valley wild, and to defend our non-profits societies.

- 8000 VOICES TAKING ACTION
- 2148 VOICES PROTECTING BC PARKS
- 1598 VOICES STANDING UP FOR THE ALR
- 760 VOICES DEFENDING NON-PROFITS

One of your biggest successes involved the future of our forests. In the spring, the provincial government proposed privatizing BC forests—changing the current system of allocating corporations a volume of wood to be cut (volume-based forest management) to giving companies long-term rights to manage the land and the forests in the form of tree-farm licenses (area-based forest management).

Over 1,000 of you sent emails to let the government know that this was not the right

solution for the long-term sustainability of our forests and communities. You asked the province to reject simplistic approaches and broaden the discussion to engage British Columbians in a real way. You told them that our forests belong to us, not to large corporations.

Your actions made all the difference. Because of you, the BC government listened. They decided not to pursue area-based forest management and to look for better solutions to address the challenges facing our forests and forest communities.

Thank you for standing up for the land, for wildlife and for the future of our communities. One voice is small, but many voices together are mighty.



GO WILD!



Justin Battye

Terek Flowers was one of twenty teenagers who participated in this year's Go Wild! program. This five-day backpacking trip into Top of the World provincial park taught a group of high school students the value of time in the mountains to connect with our wild backyards—and to hone their outdoor leadership skills. For students who have never been into the mountains, Go Wild! can be life-changing.

Terek told us the highlight for him was hiking up the highest accessible peak and looking down at the lake near the rangers cabin. He said he learned something he didn't know about himself before—he doesn't like hiking in wet snow! If he does a trip like this again, and he's definitely planning on it, he will bring lots of extra socks.

WILD NATURE TOURS



Wildsight's Wild Nature Tours connect locals with their own wild backyards and educates and inspires tourists about the ecological significance of our home.

This summer, we led hikes to Lake of the Hanging Glacier, bird watching outings in the Columbia Wetlands, paddles in voyageur canoes and interpretive grassland walks. Local experts showed us new ways of seeing through geology, animal tracking, photography, birding, and traditional plant knowledge.

Once the snow falls, we'll take you out on snowshoes and lead you through quiet forests, offering stories and an opportunity to unwind and reconnect with nature. Book a tour at wildnaturetours.ca

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY



Pat Morrow

This group of inspiring volunteers helped us build a boardwalk and wildlife observation platform on Lake Enid, near Invermere. They pounded spikes, shuttled lumber across the lake by canoe, pushed wheelbarrows and laid planks. Thank-you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who donated their labour, passion and sweat to this important step in our ongoing project to restore this heavily-used recreation area.

Our work at Lake Enid is all about community. Bringing together motorbikers, students and local First Nations to restore its beauty after years of irresponsible use has shown us all that through our combined small actions, we can make a big difference.

JOIN US!

Being a member of Wildsight means being part of our team. Valuing wilderness, wildlife and healthy communities. Believing that by taking care of the things we love, collectively, through action, we can change the world.

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