



WILD TIMES

Winter 15/16



Examining tiny snow crystals. Photo by Genna Rosel

THE WONDER OF WINTER

This winter, 3,000 primary students across the Columbia Basin will step into their wild schoolyards to experience the delight of winter ecology. Now in its ninth year, Wildsight's Winter Wonder connects students with the joys, secrets and marvels of our Kootenay winters. During a half-day field trip, they will look for snowshoe hare tracks in the snow, examine snow crystals, learn about camouflage and adaptation and fill their lungs with the crisp winter air.

Inspiring a love of nature in the next generation is the only way we can build a sustainable future. Our children are the future stewards of our planet—in order to protect the wild, they need to love it. And as kids across Canada are spending less and less time outside, creating what's often referred to as nature deficit, Winter Wonder and our four other education programs get them out there, connecting with the world right outside their

door. And because the students learn about the living world while they are in the living world, the lessons tend to stick. Since our programs began in 2001, we have taken over 60,000 kids outside.

Monica Nissen, an experienced and passionate educator who was recently honoured with a prestigious National Environmental Education award of excellence, runs all of Wildsight's education programs. She says, "It scares me to think that as education becomes increasingly wired, we're moving kids away from in-depth learning about the systems that support life. Nature is all around us, it's not just out there."

Winter Wonder encourages kids to look below the frozen surface and, using all five of their senses, discover a whole world they never knew existed.

Wildsight gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Columbia Basin Trust, Fortis BC, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, the North Face Explore Fund and the BC Gaming Commission for Winter Wonder.

3,000 KIDS EACH YEAR 31 COMMUNITIES 9 YEARS 6,000 ROSY CHEEKS



JUMBO: TAKING CARE OF THE THINGS WE LOVE

Kootenay folk have long had a love affair with the mountains. Outside of the cities and far from the mainstream, we know what matters to us and have learned how to speak in order to be heard. This year, a struggle that began in the Jumbo Valley 25 years ago—a David and Goliath story about a community saying no to a large scale development that threatened grizzly bear connectivity and the sacred values held by the Ktunaxa people—has traveled far beyond the borders of our valley.

20,000 PEOPLE HAVE SAID NO TO JUMBO GLACIER RESORT AND YES TO PERMANENT PROTECTION FOR THE JUMBO VALLEY

And our message is resonating. People around the world, in countries like Japan, Italy, France and the US have been showing their public support, shouting a unified “Keep Jumbo Wild!” While some might say Jumbo is just a local issue, there are people in different valleys all over the world who are fighting to make sure that their own special places are kept wild.

It’s people who have been the beating heart of this story from the beginning: people like Jim Galloway, the 82 year-old who spent 42 cold days in a camper as part of the monitoring camp, like Arnor Larson, a retired local mountain guide who meticulously records every infraction committed

by the resort proponents and sends them to the Environmental Assessment Office for consideration, and like Pat Morrow who inspires communities in the Purcell region with photos and films showing the beauty of the landscape and the urgent need to protect it.

Jumbo has also been a catalyst for the broader Kootenay community to learn about the Ktunaxa Nation’s beliefs and values. Qat’muk, the Ktunaxa word for the Jumbo Valley, is an area of profound significance to Ktunaxa people. When they began sharing what Qat’muk meant to them, people across the region listened and lent their support.

While some may paint the issue as divisive, in many ways it has brought our communities closer. This struggle is a story of connection and of love. Love for the wild—clean water to drink, open spaces to run, animals to remind us of our nature and mountain peaks to connect us to something bigger than ourselves.





Jumbo Pass Sunrise, Steve Shannon

CONSERVATION AND CITIZEN ACTION IN THE PURCELLS

To tell the real story of Jumbo we have to go back a century. The Purcell Mountains have long been filled with adventurers and rabble rousers, ever since Albert MacCarthy took the first climbing action photos of Conrad Kain with his folding Eastman Kodak camera in 1916, when he recorded the pioneering ascent of Bugaboo Spire with his wife, Bess.

“WILDERNESS IS A STATE OF MIND AND HEART.”

Ansel Adams

Later, in the 1960s, conservationists Art Twomey and John Bergenske discovered the unique wilderness of those same Purcell Mountains and set out to protect them. First, they built a rough-hewn log cabin high in the St. Mary's Valley. Not long after, Twomey and a few friends produced the first natural history and hiking guide to the region. The book, along with slideshows made up of photos that poured in from people on both sides of the Purcells, was instrumental in convincing the BC government to create the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy.

The Purcell Wilderness Conservancy is Southern Canada's largest protected wilderness area. But, between the Conservancy and Bugaboo Provincial Park to the North, lies the vast wilderness of the Jumbo Valley and the Central Purcells, under threat of development and industrial activity.

Last year, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the

Conservancy and the rich history of photography in the region, thousands of you submitted photos of your favourite places and quiet meditations to our Look Outside photo contest. Not only did you highlight the ecological importance and beauty of the area, your photos displayed a deep and abiding love of the Purcells.

And now, with the whole world's eyes on Jumbo and tens of thousands of people raising their voices to ask for permanent protection of this special valley, we have an opportunity to turn that love into action, to think bigger than Jumbo and do more than say no. Now is our time to say yes. Yes to the wild, yes to clean water, yes to nature and yes to conservation. This is our opportunity to expand the legacy of protection of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy by protecting the Central Purcell Mountains for the future.



John Bergenske harvests carrots at the Purcell cabin

BEYOND RECYCLING



This fall, 3000 students across the Columbia Basin began a 24-week investigation into the impact of their lifestyles—energy, waste and consumption—to discover how their everyday actions affect the health of the planet and how they can be agents of positive change. The goal of Beyond Recycling, our solutions-focused sustainability education program for intermediate students, is to inspire and empower youth to take a leadership role in making positive environmental changes in their homes, schools and communities.

Since Beyond Recycling began in 2006, it has grown from one program in one community to 20 programs in 13 communities! Contact us about starting a program in your local school.

NELSON'S NEW WETLAND



Photo: Raegan Mallinson

Our water team has begun work on a new wetland in Nelson that will naturally treat stormwater before it flows into Kootenay Lake. By slowing down stormwater runoff and filtering it down into the ground, wetlands give natural biological processes time to break down pollutants. To establish the wetlands, we'll stabilize the shoreline by planting native species and pulling out invasive weeds. We'll train citizen scientists to monitor water quality before and after the shoreline is stabilized, and teach students and community members about the process hands-on. Not only will the wetland improve water quality in Kootenay Lake, but it will promote and nurture a strong water stewardship ethic in the community.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: FERN MARRIOTT



Holly and Fern at the Elk Valley Harvest Festival

Fern Marriott, originally from Ontario, never felt at home living in the big city. She moved with her family to Fernie to live surrounded by nature and to be nurtured by the mountains, clean air and water. She felt drawn to others who shared her values, so she joined her local Wildsight branch and became aware that the branch was actively pursuing a physical office space where they could connect, meet the public and store their materials. Then one day, Fern thought, what if I could make this happen? And so, for the last five years, Fern Marriott has covered the monthly office expense for Wildsight Elk Valley. All of us at Wildsight are inspired by Fern's generosity and commitment. Together, we can make change.

WILDSIGHT IS PEOPLE LIKE YOU

Being a member of Wildsight means being part of our team. Give the gift of the wild to the people you care about this holiday season. Gift memberships are available online or by calling our office. Collectively, through action, we can change the world.

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