



"If you're still smiling, you don't understand the news."

Berthold Brecht

February 2017

SAGE Meeting, no meeting in February.

Environmental Gathering in Edmonton, presented by Alberta EcoTrust. February 23-25th. For more information: <http://albertaecotrust.com/gathering2017/>

Helen Schuler Nature Centre **Wild Side of Love**, Feb 8th at 6:30 p.m.
hsnc@lethbridge.ca

Helen Schuler Nature Centre Family Day, February 20th, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ReGenerate Design for a **Welcome to the Food Forest Lethbridge Sustainable Living Association**.

Castle Management Plan

The Government of Alberta has officially established the Castle Provincial Park, and has expanded the Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

From the government website: "The establishment of these areas under Parks' legislation will protect important fish and wildlife habitats, shared international wildlife populations and provide headwater protection. In addition, this will enhance the significant recreation and tourism potential of the area, contribute to the local economy, improve the quality of life of Albertans and continue to position Alberta as an international tourism destination.

Conservation of nature will be the primary objective of both

parks. Biodiversity conservation, protection of headwaters and species at risk, and ecological connectivity will underscore management decisions. Indigenous Peoples' rights, cultural values and traditional uses are of critical importance."

The Castle Wildland Provincial Park will be approximately 80,000 hectares and includes some of the most critical areas "for headwaters and wildlife, including major wildlife movement corridors for wide-ranging species such as grizzly bear, and habitat for threatened species such as westslope cutthroat trout."

The Wildland Provincial Park will have a limited trail system and will provide wilderness experiences with backcountry campsites that minimize visitor impacts.

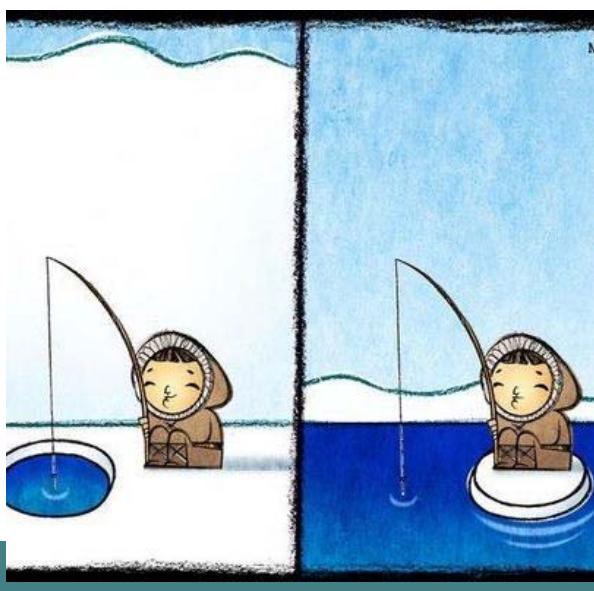
The draft [Castle Management Plan](#) states that the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Park will not permit recreational off-highway vehicle use. These parks, the report says, already have high levels of linear disturbance requiring significant restoration. Its high level of biodiversity

and its importance as a source of fresh water justifies the decision to limit and, perhaps, reverse existing damage, including critical habitat for species at risk, including the westslope cutthroat trout and 200 rare or at-risk species living on the eastern slopes. Furthermore, the draft plan states that OHV use is incompatible with quiet recreational experiences. Current OHV use will be transitioned out of these parks over the next 3 to 5 years.

The management vision articulated in the Plan emphasizes the importance of reclaiming and preserving ecologically functioning ecosystems that are self-sustaining and resilient to environmental stresses caused by human activity.

The decision made by the Government of Alberta is a good example of the precautionary principle that promotes action to avert the risk of irreversible harm to this sensitive environment.

The public has 60 days to comment on the Castle Management Plan at <https://talkaep.alberta.ca/CastleManagementPlan>



Ernst vs. Alberta Energy Regulator

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Jessica Ernst cannot sue the Alberta Energy Regulator for having been refused her Charter Rights to be heard regarding the contamination of the groundwater under her land near Rosebud, Alberta. The land was allegedly contaminated by the fracturing of shallow gas wells by Encana Corporation in 2004.

Four of the judges supported Jessica's claim, while five rejected it, upholding the 'immunity clause' that protects the Regulator from lawsuits or Charter claims.

The industry –funded regulator had accused Ernst of 'criminal threats' and judged her a 'terrorist' without evidence. She was unable to pursue due process with the Regulator as they refused to correspond with her. Court documents indicate that the Regulator spurned Ernst because of her publically humiliating the Regulator.

"All Canadians have lost in this decision," Ernst told [The Tyee](#). "Whenever any Canadian is harmed by pipelines or fracking and they present evidence of harm to a regulator and then that regulator ignores or denies that evidence, citizens can no longer sue for justice."

Jessica Ernst can now proceed with her lawsuit against Encana and the Government of Alberta. Support and financial donations for her cause can be made at: www.ernstversusencana.ca/

Interesting Links:

Energy Efficiency Jobs in America (Dec 2016)

https://www.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/EnergyEfficiencyJobsInAmerica_FINAL.pdf

This One Weird Trick Will Not Convince Conservatives to Fight Climate Change (Dec 2016)

<http://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2016/12/28/14074214/climate-denialism-social>

Climate on the Line http://pricefofoil.org/content/uploads/2017/01/climate_on_the_line_FINAL-OCI.pdf



Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE)

A Leading Voice for a Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Community.

Visit us at: <http://sage-environment.org/>

If you are interesting in getting involved, contact us at:

sage-communications@sage-environment.org

Boundary Creek Landowners Group

Notice: Please be advised that the rezoning application, for **Agriculture to Group Country Residential**, has been withdrawn and the Public Hearing has been cancelled.

The developers have submitted a new rezoning application, from **Agriculture to Direct Control**. Once venue availability is confirmed, a new Public Hearing date will be set. New letters will need to be submitted, relevant to this new rezoning application.

While this change to Direct Control may reduce some of Cardston County's concerns regarding enforcement issues, the impacts on Lee Creek, the wildlife and the environment; the land use incompatibility issues; and the fiscal issues still remain the same.

A new Public Hearing date and location will be forward to SAGE.



The graphic features a stylized face of the Oldman River, with green hair and blue skin, looking towards the right. A speech bubble above it says 'Voices of the Oldman'. To the right, the text reads ': Agriculture Matters'. Below that, it asks 'ARE YOU A... LANDOWNER, IRRIGATOR, FARMER, RANCHER, PRODUCER...ETC?'. At the bottom, it says 'Are you passionate about the future of ag?'. A green box at the bottom contains the text: 'IF SO...the Oldman Watershed Council wants to hear from YOU. Your input is VITAL! Have your voice heard!' followed by a bulleted list of topics for discussion.

Voices of the Oldman : Agriculture Matters

ARE YOU A...
LANDOWNER, IRRIGATOR,
FARMER, RANCHER,
PRODUCER...ETC?

Are you passionate about the future of ag?

IF SO...the Oldman Watershed Council wants to hear from YOU.
Your input is VITAL! Have your voice heard!

- 3 sessions in the Oldman watershed.
- Panel of local ag. experts with updates on current stewardship projects.
- Roundtable discussions on:
- The direction/future of agriculture in s.AB.
- How the OWC can support the ag. community & the rural way of life.

Outcomes will be shared with participants.

The Abstract Wild

The Abstract Wild cover detail says: "If anything is endangered in America it is our experience of wild nature—gross contact. There is knowledge only the wild can give us, knowledge specific to it, knowledge specific to the experience of it. These are its gifts to us."

Jack Turner describes his experiences in the wilderness, and the diminishing wildness of the wilderness. He describes his experiences in the western United States as a climber and hiker, finding the inspiration of remote and mystically powerful places. He then describes visiting these same places many years later, accessing them on paved roads or through wilderness tours. Turner concludes that managed land is no longer wild. He also concludes that the efforts of governments to preserve wild lands are the very mechanisms of its destruction.

It is not always easy to understand Turner's concept of the wild. He compares it to a response to art: 'art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation' (p.3). He taps into the same sense of the wild as expressed by other authors from Thoreau to Leopold to Neil Evernden and Doug Peacock. It is a hunger for a mystical experience, to step out of human thought into a more primal understanding of our place. Turner says: "If I have an interest in preservation, it is in preserving the power of presence – of landscape, art, flora, and fauna. ... the loss of aura and presence is the main reason we are losing so much of the natural world" (p.15).

Turner relates our loss of wildness to our ecological challenges. Quoting Wendell Berry, he sees the ecological crisis as a crisis of character. Simply put, without experiencing the wild there is little possibility of there being

a political or social will to preserve it. "Although the ecological crisis appears new (because it is now "news"), it is not new; only the scale and form are new. We lost the world bit by bit for ten thousand years and forgave each loss and then forgot. Now we face the final loss" (p.20).

So, Jack Turner is angry. His book resonates with anger. "Because effective protest is grounded in anger, and we are not (consciously) angry. Anger nourishes hope and fuels rebellion, it presumes a judgement, presumes how things ought to be and aren't, presumes a caring. Emotion remains the best evidence of belief and value" (p.21) But what do we really value, and how do we value. It seems the very act of 'valuing' leaves its marks on the wild - another paradox. Turner argues: "Instead of a shared vision of the good, we have a collection of property rights and utility calculations" (p.53). And this shared vision of the good can only come from experience of the wild.

One can sense through *The Abstract Wild* the unvirtuous spiral. As the vision of the wild decreases, the amount of preserved wilderness diminishes - to the point where two thirds of wilderness parks in the United States are smaller in size than Disney World (p.55). With less access to the wild, the opportunity to experience the wild declines.

In his *Fact-Book*, Thoreau noted that 'wild' is the past participle of 'to will' - to be self-willed ... "what counts is wildness and wilderness is determined not by the absence of people, but by the relationship between people and place. A place is wild when its order is created according to its own principles of organization – when it is self-willed

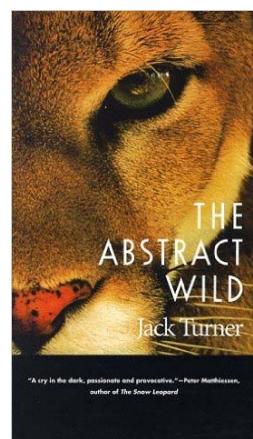


land" (p.112). In other words, Turner argues, 'leave it alone.'

"Nature 'ends' because it loses its own self-ordering structure, hence its autonomy, hence its wildness" (p.109). The tension is between 'wilderness as property' and 'wilderness as quality', says Turner. "Worship of wilderness designation thus becomes idolatry, the confusion of a symbol with its essence. In either case the result is the same: destruction of the wild" (p.87).

Turner believes that "economic language (and its extensions in law) exhaustively describes our world and, hence, *becomes* our world. Moral, aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual orders are then merely subjective tastes of no social importance. ... [It is] as though having failed to persuade and woo your love, you suddenly switched to cash. The new economic conservationists think they are being rational; I think they treat Mother Earth like a whorehouse" (p.58).

Turner concludes: "To construct a new conservation ethic, we need first to understand why we impose a human order on nonhuman orders. We do so for gain, the gain being in prediction, efficiency, and hence, control. Faced with the accelerating destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of species, we believe our only option lies in increased prediction, efficiency, and control. So we fight to preserve ecosystems and species, and we accept their diminished wildness: (p.111).



"A cry in the dark, passionate and provocative." —Peter Matthiessen, author of *The Snow Leopard*

Despite its obvious pessimism, the reader can glimpse the delight Turner feels in the wild. His descriptions of nature and mystical places is inspiring. And his message should be taken seriously.



A leading voice for a healthy and
environmentally sustainable community.

Box 383 Lethbridge AB T1J 3E9

January 29, 2017

To: Mayor Spearman and Council

Re: Community Curbside Recycling

The Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE) commends the City of Lethbridge for its leadership and commitment to better managing municipal solid waste: by setting strong waste diversion goals, by its dedicated support for diversion in the ICI and C&D sectors, and by its decision to implement community-wide curbside recycling.

We understand the complexity of the issues around waste diversion, but we also understand that there are long-term benefits to recycling and composting, including the surety of feedstock for future manufacturers, the conservation of non-renewable energy and mineral resources, the reduction of pollutants and greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, the protection of fresh water systems from leachate contamination, and the simple fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to site landfills close to urban centers where we may dispose of our solid waste. As SAGE has consistently advocated: in the absence of strong motivations to reduce our consumption and repair/reuse products, we have a minimum obligation as a community to responsibly manage our waste.

SAGE would also like to acknowledge the skilled and committed team in Waste & Recycling Services for their efforts in providing a coherent waste management plan adopting best practices from many other municipalities. Perhaps more importantly, we appreciate their notable efforts in communicating the process, the outcomes and the benefits of the waste management plan in the broader community. Our understanding has greatly benefited by their clearly presented research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Braum Barber".

Braum Barber
Executive Director