Civil Society and Protected Areas: Lessons from Canada's Experience

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> How can a Minister stand up against the pressures of commercial interests who want to use the parks for mining, forestry, for every kind of honky-tonk recreational device known to man, unless the people who love these parks are prepared to band together and support the minister by getting the facts out across the country?
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> — *Honourable Alvin Hamilton, Hansard* 1960*

Introduction

Protected areas, especially national parks, are a highly valued component of Canadian life. They are of critical importance to the survival of many species of wildlife and to the provision of ecosystem services, including freshwater production and carbon sequestration. Civil society is the owner of those protected areas.

The term "civil society" is a way of referring to the public when it acts as individual citizens or through nongovernmental organizations for public-spirited reasons, and is distinct from other social groupings such as government, business, or family. (It does not include aboriginal groups, who are a form of government.)

Contrary to recent conventional academic wisdom, the origin and development of Canada's parks and protected areas lies not in business interests or the doctrine of commercial usefulness, but rather in the interests of civil society. Indeed, it is the special innovation of protected areas in North America (and Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa), starting in the 19th century, that they are dedicated to the public.

Civil society's engagement, or lack of it, has been and will likely continue to be *the* determining factor in the success of protected areas in Canada. History has shown that when civil society practices absentee ownership, the result is the destruction or disappearance of protected areas, and that when civil society leaves new protected area establishment exclusively to government, little gets done. The periods of public engagement in Canada's protected

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* *Hansard* is the familiar name of the *Official Report of Debates* of the Canadian parliament. It is named after Thomas Hansard, the publisher of the report of debates in the English parliament in the early 19th century.

areas have led to the creation of some of the world's most emblematic national parks and several world-class protected areas systems. Yet there is much more that needs to be done to respond to the grave environmental conditions we have created for ourselves in the 21st century. We should be protecting at least half of Canada's lands and waters in interconnected protected areas in order to do our share to keep intact the Earth and the natural systems we all depend on.

Principles for civil society and protected areas

This paper will elaborate the following four principles, which can serve as a guide for considering the role of civil society in protected areas:

- Civil society is now—and always has been—the owner and primary beneficiary of parks and most protected areas, not just a stakeholder.
- When civil society is engaged, parks and protected areas thrive and new ones are created.
- When civil society is disengaged, bad things happen to parks and protected areas.
- To face 21st-century challenges, civil society should promote an expanded public agenda based on a major role for parks and protected areas that results in protection from industrial exploitation of at least half of Canada's public lands and waters in a system of interconnected protected areas.

Civil society is *the* owner of protected areas

A critically important but often overlooked point about Canada's parks and protected areas is that they are owned by and dedicated to civil society. Civil society is not just another stakeholder, or a claimant under a government program, or a competing interest group. Civil society is *the* primary beneficiary of protected areas and thus the most important group. Indeed, from the beginning our protected areas have been dedicated to the public through the passage of public statutes.

The civil society basis of Canadian protected areas

The most widely known system of protected areas in Canada is that of the national parks. The Parks Canada Agency was started in 1911 as a department of the Ministry of the Interior when its first commissioner, J.B. Harkin, a former journalist, was appointed. This makes it the oldest national parks agency in the world. Harkin felt that one of his first duties was to determine what parks were about. In notes that were later assembled by his long-time secretary Mabel Williams into *The History and Meaning of the National Parks of Canada,* he recounts that he looked to the world's first national park, Yellowstone (established in 1872 by an act of the US Congress), as the guiding inspiration for both the Canadian national park idea and management objectives. He noted the key role civil society played in Yellowstone's creation through "a continent-wide campaign" which "breathe[d] the true spirit of democ-

racy." To Harkin, the effect of creating this first national park was significant, for it represented "a new Declaration of Rights—the right of the people to share in the use and enjoyment of the noblest regions in their own land, another great expression of the principle of Conservation—the duty of [a] nation to guard its treasures of art, natural beauty, or natural wonders for generations to come."

In 1930, Harkin and others were able to get this declaration of rights and the principle of conservation enshrined in Canada's National Parks Act. It states that "the national parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This dedication clause is similarly worded to the key clause in the US National Park Service Act, passed in 1916.

Canada now has one of the better-run national park agencies in the world. It is governed by the 1998 Parks Canada Agency Act, a complement to Canada's National Parks Act, which provides that it is in the "national interest" to protect national parks and national marine conservation areas "in view of their special role in the lives of Canadians and the fabric of the nation." The Parks Canada Agency Act also contains a provision that enshrines a degree of ministerial accountability to civil society for the management of our parks through the requirement to convene a biannual roundtable gathering of knowledgeable persons.

Much of Canada's public land is under control of the provinces, some of which have created parks for the public benefit using legislative language that incorporates the civil society spirit of the national park dedication clause. For example, Ontario's Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act states that "Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves are dedicated to the people of Ontario and visitors for their inspiration, education, health, recreational enjoyment and other benefits with the intention that these areas shall be managed to maintain their ecological integrity and to leave them unimpaired for future generations." Alberta's Willmore Wilderness Park Act says, "The Park is dedicated to the use of the people of Alberta for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and shall, by the management, conservation and protection of its natural resources and by the preservation of its natural beauty, be maintained for the enjoyment of future generations."

In the last 40 years, a new form of protected area has emerged that is entirely embedded within civil society. Land trusts, which are civil society actors created by private individuals and supported by special treatment under the tax system, are now buying land for conservation reasons. These land trusts often seek public funds for their activities, sometimes by justifying their activities as a necessary adjunct to buffer or link governmentally run protected areas. Examples are The Nature Conservancy of Canada's Waterton Front Project and Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2007 announcement of CDN$225 million in funding to land trusts for connectivity between protected areas (Harper 2008).

Civil society works on an international level as well, and some of the most exceptional protected areas in our country have been designated as World Heritage sites under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, familiarly known as the World Heritage Convention. It is "a convention establishing an effective sys-

tem of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods." As a signatory to this treaty, Canada "recognizes … the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage." The beneficiary of this duty is international civil society.

In sum, protected areas are a public good often explicitly dedicated by law to the current citizenry and to future citizens yet unborn. Governments hold them in trust for civil society.

The "doctrine of usefulness" and it variants: The alleged commercial origin of Canada's national parks

Most Canadians believe that parks are created to protect wilderness and wildlife and to allow our enjoyment of protected nature. But historians and other park experts have often taken pains to say that that is not their origin (Hart 2005). Frequently they refer to the Canadian Pacific Railway's desire to build its tourism business, and to the "doctrine of usefulness" propounded by Robert Craig Brown in a paper presented at an influential 1968 conference titled "The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" (Nelson and Scace 1969). In the paper, Brown asserted that "the original parks policy of Canada was not a departure from but rather a continuation of the [existing] general resource policy" of the government, which was to view natural resources exclusively in terms of their material utility to people (Brown 1969:97). The doctrine of usefulness has been accepted uncritically to the detriment of a full understanding of park history (MacEachern 2001).

The commercial doctrine of usefulness argument is usually buttressed with two quotes. First, from Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, who said that Banff is "a spot … which promises … not only large pecuniary advantage to the Dominion, but much prestige.… It has all the qualifications to make it a place of great resort.… This section of the country should be brought at once into usefulness, that people should be encouraged to come there, that hotels should be built" (*Hansard* 1887). The second quote often referred to is by William Cornelius Van Horne, the president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who said around the same time: "If we can't export the scenery, we'll import the tourists."

Similarly, perhaps due to a fit of nationalism, it is also sometimes asserted that the US experience of Yellowstone has nothing to do with Canadian park history, which begins with a 10-square-mile reserve around the Cave and Basin Hot Springs at Banff in 1885. The argument goes that the unsightly development of thermal pools at Hot Springs, Arkansas (which was established as a public reservation beginning in 1832, and later became as US national park), was the inspiration for Banff National Park because there was a desire to show we could do a better job. Brown wrote: "The park was clearly intended to be a showpiece for Canada, deliberately modeled to be superior in planning and execution to the Hot Springs in Arkansas" (Brown 1969).

These views have been woven into the idea that, in their origins, our parks were "islands of development in a sea of wilderness" that were set up at the urgings of railways and designed to make profits for the private interests in the tourist industry. This perspective is

repeated in the fixed interpretive exhibits found in Parks Canada's Cave and Basin Centennial Centre in Banff National Park, as well as the film that is shown there, titled *Steam, Schemes and National Dreams* (which have been in place for about 15 years). Brown's thesis also has been embraced, directly or indirectly, by many writers who are authorities on our parks.

It is time to adjust this view. These received truths are unfortunate and largely inaccurate views of Canadian park history. They serve to downplay the primacy of civil society interests in our parks and protected areas and they have been used to legitimate the demands of commercial interests at the expense of the public by suggesting that commercial interests have some antecedent claim to the parks. The nationalistic narrative also completely misses the fact that Canada was a participant in a late-nineteenth-century effort across the English-speaking world to protect wild nature and wildlife in parks.

The real origins of Canada's national parks

It is my contention that Canada's national parks system either begins with the Rocky Mountains Park Act of 1887 or the Order in Council (an administrative decision that originates in the federal cabinet) reserving four areas for parks in 1885, not just the Order in Council relating to the Cave and Basin Hot Springs on November 12, 1885, as is usually maintained. The exclusive focus in our park histories on the Banff hot springs has confused the record. That reserve was only protected by an Order in Council for a period of two years, and there were other areas reserved by the same method *earlier* that same year. The annual report of the Department of the Interior for 1886 states the following under the heading "Park Reservations in the Rocky Mountains":

> In addition to the reservations at Banff already alluded to, four mountain parks were reserved by Order in Council of the 10th of October last:—
>
> — A park at Mount Stephen including the country surrounding the base of the mountain and adjacent picturesque points.
> — A reservation in the vicinity of Mount Sir Donald, taking in the loop of the railway and adjacent territory.
> — A sufficient area in the Eagle Pass to include Griffin and Three Valley Lakes, and adjoining points of interest.
> — The amphitheatre at the summit of the Selkirk Mountains.

These four areas did not have hot springs. And the 1886 Interior report mentions in the context of the Banff hot springs reservation that, in addition to receiving information about Arkansas' Hot Springs, "this Department was furnished with … publications respecting the Yellowstone National Park, all of which have been found valuable and useful."

If one is willing to accept that an Order in Council is sufficient means to start our national park system, then it was the first Order in Council of October 10, 1885, that did it. And it is clear that these reservations were not set up to spend money so as to bring them into "use-

fulness." In response to criticism about public investment in infrastructure in the Banff area during the Rocky Mountains Park Act debate, Minster of the Interior Thomas White said:

> That is not the only park that we have ventured by Order in Council to reserve. We have reserved others, but have made no expenditure on them, for the simple reason that they required no expenditure to bring them into use.... We had no less than four forest reservations throughout the mountains, and my impression is that they will prove advantageous not simply as large groves of fine forest trees in parks of which we all ought to be proud, but they will be of advantage to the country in regards to its salubrity... (*Hansard* 1887).

The real discussion about the purpose of our first national park begins with the establishment of Rocky Mountains National Park in 1887. A review of the *Hansard* record of the debate shows several references by several speakers to Yellowstone and few references by few speakers to Hot Springs, Arkansas. The latter references are usually confined to the narrow context of spending decisions. The inspiration of Yellowstone is demonstrated in two telling quotes:

> Mr. Trow: "The Minister of the Interior has just stated that he thinks I was the individual who first drew the attention of the Government to the advisability of reserving a portion of the territory near Banff for a public park..., I was not aware that I had much influence with [the] Minister but I stated the true facts of the case, and that it would be advisable to make of this place a park similar to the Yellowstone Park in Montana."
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> Mr. Allan (in committee): "We have the advantage of the example of our neighbours in the National Park they have laid out in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in the United States" (*Hansard* 1887).

The text of the 1887 Rocky Mountains Park Act itself confirms the proposition that it was Yellowstone that was the inspiration, and civil society the beneficiary, of our first national park. It provides at section 2 that the area be "reserved and set apart as a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada" and was modeled on similar language in the Yellowstone Park Act. As Fergus Lothian wrote in the *History of the National Parks of Canada,* "Departmental officers had as a prototype Yellowstone National Park ... and there is every reason to believe that [this clause's] framers had recourse to the United Sates legislation" (Lothian 1976:26). Even the name of the park chose to emphasize the Rocky Mountains, not the hot springs, and the first park included Lake Minnewanka and the mountains around it, not just the hot springs and Banff townsite. The 1887 act also made explicit provision for the protection of the park's wildlife, which is not consistent with the park's being all about a hot spring spa.

It is also clear from the *Hansard* record of the 1887 debates that the public, not commercial interests, was to be the beneficiary of this new park inspired by Yellowstone. Here

are three illustrative quotes:

> Mr. Hawthorn (in Committee, second reading): "I think this is an occasion on which we may offer our congratulations to the people of the Dominion upon the probability of their possessing quite a unique park.... In this country we do not possess the material advantages that they have in older countries. We have no antiquities here except for our 'mountains hoar' and our 'ancient trees' and these things, left as nature has left them for us, are in their way, perhaps as great attractions as the ruins of Europe."
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> Mr. Kaulbach (in Committee, second reading): "I am glad to have the opportunity of thanking the government for reserving this piece of property for the public and for preventing it getting into the hands of speculators."
>
> Mr. Casey: "I think everyone is agreed as to the advisability of reserving some portion of our vast domain near the Rocky Mountains for the purposes of a public pleasure ground."

The Canadian Pacific Railway certainly benefited, but the purpose of the park was public benefit, nature conservation, and national identity. Sir John A. Macdonald explicitly rejected privatizing the area by selling it to the railway, "who would only be too glad to take the land and make 1000 percent out of it" (*Hansard* 1887). The same day (May 3, 1887), Sir Donald Smith, who was deeply involved in the Canadian Pacific Railway, said: "Anyone who has gone to Banff, and from the plateau on which the hotel is to be built, has looked down on the fall immediately below ... who has looked on the reaches of the Bow River, and, on turning round beheld the mountains towering heavenward, and not felt himself elevated and proud that all this is part of the Dominion cannot be a true Canadian."

This not to deny that Rocky Mountains Park did include hot springs and a townsite that were to be developed, and that these were seen as very important actions in the park (Figure 1). But any doubt regarding the conservation and public-spirited motivations for our early national park *system* is immediately set to rest by examining the other park creation efforts that were concurrent with or immediately followed the creation of Rocky Mountains National Park. Brown and others who advance the hot springs-centered view of our park history simply ignore these.

Most of the earliest parks were created or expanded at the urging of civil society

Though the reserve around the hot springs at Banff started out very small in 1885 at 10 square miles, by the time of the debates in 1887 Rocky Mountains National Park included not only the hot springs and the Banff townsite area but also the mountains nearby and Lake Minnewanka, for an area of 260 square miles. In the late 1890s, citizen advocates and administrators called for a further massive expansion of Rocky Mountains National Park. They compared Yellowstone's 3,000 square miles to Rocky Mountains' relatively small 260-

Figure 1 Contemporary view of Banff National Park, with Banff townsite. Photo courtesy of Harvey Locke.

square-mile area. In 1902, supported by editorials in Vancouver and Winnipeg newspapers, the federal government enlarged the park to 4,400 square miles by including Lake Louise and its surrounding area and the wilderness watersheds of the Upper Bow, Kananaskis, Red Deer, and Spray rivers (Lothian 1976).

Nor were Canada's other early parks intended to be "islands of civilization in a sea of wilderness," as has been asserted. They were areas dedicated to nature appreciation in the public interest. Yoho National Park (which began as Mount Stephen Reservation) and Glacier National Park in British Columbia (which began as reservations at Mount Sir Donald and the Amphitheatre at the summit of the Selkirk Mountains) both started small. Small reserves were also set up at Lake Louise in 1892 and Waterton in 1894. Eventually they all had hotels associated with railways. Though their small size, combined with the presence of some tourism development, might tend to support the "islands of civilization" theory, the fact is that these first parks did not stay small for very long. Civil society almost immediately insisted on their expansion to protect more of the mountains.

Glacier National Park was enlarged to 576 square miles in 1903 as "the Minister acceded to public demand that a larger area of outstanding scenery be set aside for public use" (Lothian 1976). Similarly, Yoho National Park was expanded from 10 square miles around a railway hotel to 828 square miles in 1901 (it is now 507 square miles).

Waterton Lakes National Park started out as the Kootenay Lakes Forest Park in 1895 and was created as a result of the civic activism of rancher L.W. Goodsal, John George "Kootenai" Brown, and other southern Albertans. There was no railway hotel involved until

the 1920s. Initially only 10 square miles in size, the park was greatly enlarged after activists kept campaigning for a more meaningful size. Today it is 204 square miles (Lothian 1976). But the park is still incomplete because it lacks a large wilderness area. Unlike its adjoining US neighbor, Glacier National Park in Montana, it protects none of the magnificent and wildlife-rich wilderness of the Flathead Valley. Today this deficiency is the subject of an ongoing civil society conservation campaign to expand the park, called Flathead Wild (www.flathead.ca).

When Jasper National Park was established in 1908, the boundary left out key areas. The Alpine Club of Canada, a civil society organization, lobbied to have the park include important wilderness areas like the Columbia Icefield and Maligne Lake such that by 1914 it became 4,400 square miles in size (Lothian 1976). Jasper is 4,200 square miles today. Similarly, at the urging of the citizens of nearby Revelstoke, British Columbia, Mount Revelstoke National Park was created in 1915.

There were some anomalies other than the Banff hot springs that have been used to justify the doctrine of usefulness and it variations. There were coal mines at Bankhead in Rocky Mountains and Pocahontas in Jasper and a lead zinc mine at Cathedral Mountain in Yoho, and a few grandfathered-in logging operations. But these anomalies do not change the fact that these parks were set up with public support for the public interest, and they quickly grew to protect vast areas that remain to this day in a wilderness condition.

In addition to federal parks, important provincial parks were created in British Columbia around the same period for nature appreciation reasons: Strathcona, Mount Robson, Mount Assiniboine, and Mount Garibaldi. These parks continue to protect outstanding wilderness areas. The enormous Hamber Provincial Park was created on the British Columbia side of Banff and Jasper, creating a protected connection from them to Glacier National Park in the Selkirk Mountains, but, as we shall see, it suffered a different fate.

Brown was wrong when he said "the original parks policy of Canada was not a departure from but a continuation of the general resource policy that grew out of the expansionist, exploitive economic programs of the national policy of the MacDonald [sic] Government" (Brown 1969:97). His "doctrine of usefulness" more aptly applies to early "national" parks established in the 1890s by Ontario and Quebec, which are actually provincial parks despite the term "national" in their name (a confusing appellation that persists to this day in some cases). These include Algonquin National Park (Killan 1993) in Ontario and Tremblant and Laurentides national parks in Quebec (Hebert 1968). They were established to protect wildlife, support recreation, and promote wise use of the forest resources there (Tremblant also had a tuberculosis sanitarium as one of its purposes). These were more like the national forests in the United States that were set up beginning at the turn of the 20th century, where "wise use" of the forests was the original vision (Runte 1991), rather than federal national parks in Canada or the US that were set up in the same period.

Though there arguably was a national policy to develop the Canadian West as a whole grounded on a doctrine of usefulness, from the beginning there was also a separate and distinct national desire to protect the Rocky Mountains for the public in federal national parks just as the Americans had done at Yellowstone.

Wildlife conservation in the public interest

From the beginning, a provision was made for wildlife conservation in the 1887 Rocky Mountains Park Act. Shortly after Canada's first parks were created, there was heightened public and government alarm at the disappearance of large mammals from North America. Canadian writers of international renown, such as Ernest Thompson Seton, raised awareness and argued for their protection. In the first quarter of the 20th century, Canada created Buffalo National Park for plains bison (abolished in 1939; see Brower 2008). In addition, Menissawok, Wawaskesy, and Nemiskam national parks were established in 1922 for pronghorn "antelope" but later abolished when it was felt pronghorn had sufficiently recovered (Lothian 1981). Wood Buffalo National Park and the giant Thelon Game Sanctuary, both created to protect animals and their habitats, still remain in place today and are among the world's largest protected areas. All this was about nature conservation, supported by public concern for wildlife (Hewitt 1921; Lothian 1976).

Canada's first parks were part of a broader international context

The early Canadian federal park creation activities were part of a broader cultural trend in the English-speaking world. All over the British Empire and in the US, new parks were being created for the same reasons. South Africa established Kruger National Park in 1895 and Umfalozi Game Reserve and several other game reserves in 1897. Australia and New Zealand created national parks in the same period (Australia's Royal National Park predates Banff). The state of New York created Adirondack Park in 1892 to keep the land owned by the state "forever wild" and enshrined wilderness protection in the state constitution. The origins of Mount Rainer, Olympic, Grand Canyon, and Glacier national parks in the US were during this period. Game reserves were created in India in the 1920s (Stebbing 1920). Canada was at the vanguard of this international movement to protect nature in the interests of civil society with its great western mountain parks.

The two on-going roles of civil society

There are always two fundamental issues with protected areas: whether they will be created and how they are managed after establishment. This can be analogized to automobile purchases, which involve buying the shiny new car and the vital "after-sales service" that will determine its performance. Civil society's engagement is the major determinant of outcomes relating to both issues.

"After-sales service" to ensure the integrity of parks is the most overlooked role for civil society, yet anyone deeply involved knows it is essential. J.B. Harkin wrote that "the battle for the establishment of national parks is long since over but the battle to keep them inviolate is never won. Claims for the violation of their sanctity are always being put forward under the plausible plea of national or local needs" (Harkin 1957; Figure 2). US President Jimmy Carter, who during his term doubled the size of the country's national park system, wrote

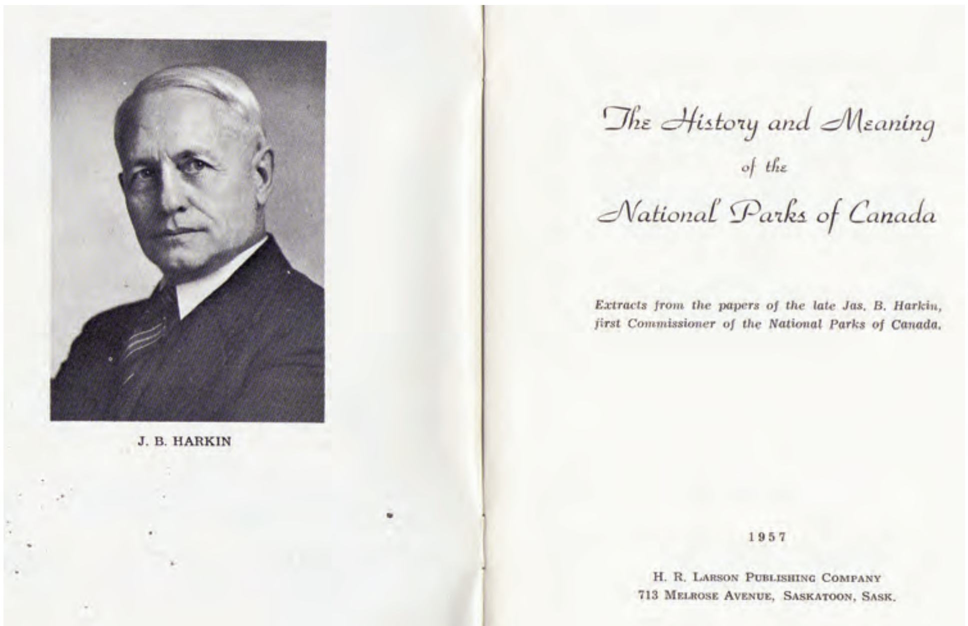
that "today and every day we must defend the parks against those who would despoil them" (Carter 2001).

The Alpine Club of Canada was the first civil society organization to concentrate on the creation and management of parks and made an enormous contribution to their well-being in the first half of the 20th century. Co-founder Elizabeth Parker wrote in 1907 that "the Alpine Club is a national trust for the defense of our mountain solitudes … for the keeping free from the grind of commerce, the wooded passes and valleys and alplands of the wilderness. It is the people's right to have access to the remote places of safest retreat from the fever and the fret of the market place and the beaten tracks of life" (Reichwein 1998).

When control over natural resources was transferred from the federal government to Alberta in 1930, there was pressure to transfer all the land, including the national parks, to the province for economic development. The Alpine Club of Canada, working in concert with Parks Commissioner Harkin, mobilized to fight this. They created the Canada National Parks Association (CNPA), whose leadership included the legendary surveyor and longtime Alpine Club President A.O. Wheeler, and the conservationist Selby Walker of Calgary.

Evidence of their efforts can be seen in the record of *Hansard* during the debate in 1930 regarding the proposed deletion of significant areas from Rocky Mountains National Park in the area of Spray Lakes–Kananaskis and north and east of Lake Minnewanka, as well as a portion of Jasper National Park. These lands were argued to be "more suitable for industrial and commercial purposes than for national park purposes." Senator Foster noted there were objections: "There is a very lively and commendable interest on the part of the people of Canada in this matter of public parks. I have received twenty or thirty communications

Figure 2 Title page of J.B. Harkin's history of the Canadian national parks. Photo courtesy of H.R. Larson Publishing Company.



within the last fortnight … calling attention to a rather general fear that the parks may be reduced in area for commercial purposes.… ” The objections failed to prevent the deletion of some lands, but they appear to have had an impact. In the Senate, a government representative, Mr. Graham, noted that things could have been much worse: "A considerable area is being taken form the parks, but it must be remembered, —and again I am not telling tales out of school—that the provinces were eager to have the entire park area.… That was discussed time and again but the Dominion Government would not agree to go so far."

Unfortunately, little remains of the CNPA's history and the organization has been largely forgotten, though there are some efforts to gather newsletters and do other research (P. Reichwein, pers. comm., 2008). The author once tried to locate the papers of this organization. He met with Mary Lynas (née Selby), who was the organization's secretary and daughter of key member Selby Walker. He was told that "Mum hated the amount of time Dad spent on the CNPA so after Dad died she burned all the papers." The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary in Calgary is, however, a lasting record of Selby Walker's commitment to conservation. It was the family homestead, which he gave to the city.

The dark period: World War II to 1960, when civil society went to sleep

The overwhelming magnitude of the Great Depression and World War II changed everything. These seismic events threatened the survival of individuals and society. Respect for and deference to government became the norm. Massive social mobilization in the war effort required authoritarian systems and yielded successful results. Scientific advances led to vast use of agricultural chemicals to increase soil productivity and crop yields. Post-war soldier resettlement, together with infrastructure programs, made society believe that big institutions were looking out for them. Canada embraced "scientific forestry" and perpetual sustained yield and trusted government and industry to deliver good management of our forests (Wilson 1998). Rivers were flooded across the country for hydropower. We built the Trans-Canada Highway.

The Canadian National Parks Association was a casualty of the war. And after the war was over, the Alpine Club of Canada shifted away from being a conservation organization to one that promoted road-building and greater tourism facilities. Reichwein described it this way: "The internal pendulum of the organization had swung from preservation to utilization as a new generation of Alpine Club men and women moved to the fore in the era of post-war expansion" (Reichwein 1998). No effective voice took the club's place to speak up for the parks.

Absentee ownership results in vandalism in the 1950s and early 1960s

In the early years of parks and protected areas in Canada, the active presence of civil society in public discourse relating to protected areas resulted in both great leaps forward for our protected areas systems and a largely successful defense of existing parks. In the 1950s, the absence of an engaged civil society led to the parks' degradation and neglect. This took two forms.

The first was a frontal assault. Whole protected areas were eliminated or greatly reduced in size. There are two dramatic examples. Hamber Provincial Park in British Columbia, whose boundaries extended from Jasper in the east to Glacier National Park in the west, was reduced to a tiny fragment abutting Jasper in order to accommodate logging and hydroelectric dam development on the Columbia River. The Mackenzie Mountains Reserve, which covered the Northwest Territories portion of that enormous mountain range, was abolished outright. The Nahanni watershed and many others were thus made open to development. The once enormous extent of these now-diminished or vanished protected areas can be seen in the 1950 edition of the *Atlas of Canada*.

To the extent that any attention was paid to parks it was primarily focused on developing infrastructure to accommodate automobile tourism instead of new park creation or wilderness and wildlife preservation (with an important exception relating to improvements in carnivore conservation in our national parks). The Trans-Canada Highway was built through the heart of four of our western national parks and Hamber Park. Canadian park officials looked with envy at the US National Park Service's Mission 66 infrastructure program and tried to emulate it. Parks Canada planners proposed building loop roads through the wilderness backcountry of Banff and Jasper, as had been done in Yellowstone.

The great reawakening of Canadian civil society in the 1960s

The *cri de coeur* from Alvin Hamilton, the minister responsible for national parks, quoted at the opening of this paper, finally awoke Canadian civil society from its long, neglectful slumber regarding protected areas. The idea of a citizen's organization to rise to the defense of parks was expressed at a 1962 Resources for Tomorrow conference of the Federal Provincial Parks Executive Association. In response, a group of people came together to create the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC) in 1963. Today, it is called the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) or, in French, SNAP (La Société pour la nature et les parcs du Canada). That same decade the Canadian Audubon Society took on new life as the Canadian Nature Federation and World Wildlife Fund of Canada was organized in Toronto. Important provincial groups such as Ontario's Algonquin Wildlands League, the Sierra Club in British Columbia, and the Alberta Wilderness Association were established, as were local groups, such as the Bow Valley Naturalists.

NPPAC led the charge for protected areas on the national stage. It set as its first task the defense of the magnificent legacy of Canada's national parks. The minutes of the NPPAC board meeting of November 12, 1965, reveal the extent of the problem that had arisen while civil society slept: "Pressures on governments from industrial and professional associations to allow the extraction of so-called resources from the parks continue.… At its 1964 convention the Canadian Institute of Forestry passed a resolution urging the government of Canada to permit lumbering in the national parks on the grounds that the timber stands were going to waste. In June of that year the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution urging that mining be allowed in the national parks. Also that June, the Ontario Mining Association decided to embark on a campaign to try to convince the people of Ontario that mining in provincial parks would be good for the province.

In the midst of these proposals, NPPAC found a symbolic issue of great importance. It took on an international fight to safeguard Banff National Park from the enormous impacts that would occur if the townsite were chosen to host the 1964 Winter Olympics, a proposal that was being pushed by the Calgary Olympic Association. It was an ugly and personal fight that NPPAC ultimately won.

This experience taught NPPAC's key members that confusion about the role and purpose of national parks was part of the problem. Working with the fledgling University of Calgary, in 1968 NPPAC helped organize the conference referred to earlier, titled "The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow" (Nelson and Scace 1969). This seminal conference set the forward ideological trajectory of parks in Canada for many years and was the University of Calgary's first major international conference.

The next fight involving civil society and national parks was even bigger. It revolved around a massive four-season resort to be called Village Lake Louise. The federal government had solicited Imperial Oil, a subsidiary of Exxon (known in the US and Canada at that time as "Esso"), the world's largest oil company, to build the resort. Here were corporate and government Goliaths. But there were civil society Davids, too.

The Calgary–Banff Chapter of NPPAC and the Banff-based Bow Valley Naturalists carried the fight in Alberta. Gavin Henderson of NPPAC led the national fight from Toronto, which included a "cut up your Esso credit card" campaign. Thousands of cut-up credit cards were mailed to the company's president. The combined effect of these actions to mobilize the Canadian public forced public hearings on a project thought by government (including Parks Canada; see Touche 1990) and Esso to be a *fait accompli.* Ultimately, the public outcry led to cancellation of the project by the federal government.

Civil society undertook similar defenses of parks and wilderness at the provincial level. The Wildlands League and others led a successful fight to ban logging from Quetico Wilderness Park in Ontario (Killan 1993). The Alberta Wilderness Association led efforts to protect the province's Eastern Slope. Citizens stood up to stop a huge mining project in Strathcona Provincial Park on Vancouver Island. In the 1970s there were also important new parks created in British Columbia, some of which is chronicled in Ric Careless' *To Save the Wild Earth* (1997). On the other hand, a disengaged public left Quebec and New Brunswick as provincial protected area "black holes" during most of the 20th century (with a few notable exceptions of parks created in the pre-World War II period).

In the early 1970s, NPPAC also sought new federal parks. It was particularly prominent in the creation of Kluane, Ayuittuq, and Nahanni national park reserves. The latter was the subject of a national campaign by NPPAC partly because the alternative to protecting the river was a hydroelectric dam at Virginia Falls. A well-publicized NPPAC field trip to Nahanni led by Jim Thorsell and a national speaking tour by George Scotter ignited the public interest. This activity corresponded with Jean Chrétien's arrival as minister responsible for national parks. In a celebrated five-dollar bet, NPPAC President Al Frame challenged Chrétien to create 10 new parks in his term. Chrétien created 12, including La Mauricie National Park in his own riding, and won the bet. Later, as prime minister, Chrétien continued this work. In 2002, he announced a national parks system expansion plan that would include ten new parks, five new marine protected areas, and the expansion of three existing

parks, including Nahanni and Waterton. (He told the author that day that he still has the $5 bill he won in the bet with NPPAC in the early 1970s.)

Prior to the great Village Lake Louise debate, parks decisions were made by Parks Canada staff and their political masters. The public was not engaged or consulted. The longer-term result of that fight was much more public engagement in national park decision-making. But the victory at Lake Louise began to look Pyrrhic in the 1980s.

The 1980s were mostly bleak

There were few successes for parks and protected areas in the 1980s, but they are worth noting. A massive national campaign by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), teamed up with the courageous efforts of the Haida people, led to the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve in the lush temperate rainforests of the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. A grassroots effort led to protection of the Valhalla Mountains and western shoreline of Slocan Lake and the Stein Valley, also in British Columbia. Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan finally got off the ground. But massive clear-cut liquidation of old-growth forests and destruction of grasslands due to agricultural policies was more the norm than new parks like Gwaii Haanas or Grasslands. Drastic budget cuts in 1985 severely impaired the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), crippling that agency's ability to properly manage existing national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries and largely halting efforts to create new ones. This legacy of a damaged CWS is still with us today.

Though the National Parks Act was amended in 1988 to include legal designation of wilderness inside parks as development-free zones, to increase fines for poaching, and to make ecological integrity the first consideration in park management plans, these had little impact. For despite the success in the early 1970s, there was no final resolution of the commercial development debate in Banff National Park. Instead of single high-profile projects like the Olympics and Village Lake Louise proposals, throughout the 1980s there was a seemingly never-ending proliferation of new hotels and proposed ski hill and golf course expansions, and the town of Banff grew significantly, as did the Lake Louise service center.

The pace of development in Banff National Park amounted to half a billion dollars in commercial development over ten years; the Banff sewerage system was overwhelmed to the point where raw sewage was discharged into the Bow River. Federal tourism infrastructure subsidies were given out to encourage development. Big expansions were proposed at the Lake Louise and Sunshine Villager ski areas. One hotel owner said to the author that "you felt like a fool if you didn't get in on it." Wildlife biologists raised the alarm that the growth of the town of Banff and expansion of outlying developments, as well as the newly twinned highway in the Bow Valley, had created serious blockages to wildlife movements. The very purpose of the park was being forgotten. A giant three-story shopping mall with indoor parking, touting itself as "Banff's Great Indoors," was built with Parks Canada approval. Then planning authority was handed over to the newly created town of Banff. And though this transfer was explicitly not one that gave away final say, it did not stop the deputy mayor from asserting Banff's independence from the federal government and the national park of which it had always formed a part. Among the many comments he made was that "the whole of

Canada forever wants to mingle in our affairs.... Go to hell, this is Banff. We live here" (Hock and Sisco 1991). At Lake Louise a huge Korean church was proposed in order to attract tourists from that country. A hotel owner wrote to his guests to describe groups who wanted to stop all this development as "lunatics [who] want to turn Banff into a wildlife sanctuary." The Canadian Pacific Railway wanted to expand its golf courses in rare montane habitat, and new commercial projects were also proposed for Jasper and Waterton, thus risking the spread of commercialism. Variations of the doctrine of usefulness were used as a justification for this unprecedented surge in commercialization.

Civil society sets the agenda in the 1990s

It was obvious that fighting individual projects in this park environment was a fool's game. So in 1992, CPAWS launched a campaign to end commercial development in Banff National Park (Locke 1994). The campaign quickly ignited a national debate. Media (both French and English) covered the issue extensively. Notable were a feature-length report on Radio Canada TV's *Le point* and an above-the-fold Christmas Eve story in the *Globe and Mail* (a leading national newspaper) headlined "Banff's Outlook Not a Pretty Picture." CBC Television's *The Nature of Things with David Suzuki* did a feature program on our national parks with Banff at its center. A lawsuit was also launched regarding a last minute pre-election exemption of the Sunshine ski area's expansion proposal from the environmental assessment process (Locke and Elgie 1995).

The new Liberal government quickly responded by announcing the Banff–Bow Valley Study. This multi-year study assembled experts and competing interests and took stock of the state of affairs. It reached the conclusion that Banff was deeply compromised and that development not only had to be stopped but reversed in certain areas (Banff–Bow Valley Task Force 1996). Despite a fierce lobby from Canadian Pacific and the newly formed business and downhill skier lobby group called Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment, Environment Minister Sheila Copps, backed by Prime Minister Chrétien, announced that the study would be accepted and major parts implemented (Copps 1997).

But the study did not cover the town of Banff and so a subsequent battle ensued. After a local plebiscite was held, the town council decided to vote itself the right to enact large amounts of further commercial development. A counter-vote by the Canadian public was organized by CPAWS at Mountain Equipment Co-op stores in several cities (Figure 3). Canadians from across the country voted to end commercial development in Banff in numbers that exceeded the votes cast in Banff. The result was a federal decision to end commercial development, the reduction of the town boundary, and an amendment to the National Parks Act to remove the capacity to create other towns inside national parks.

In the 1990s, civil society moved to the offensive on the new protected areas front too. At the international level, the publication of *Our Common Future* (1988), known also as the Brundtland Report on Sustainable Development, coincided with a major increase in public concern for the environment. It called for the worlds' protected area estate to be at least tripled from the existing level of 4% of the world's land area. This galvanized action in Can-

Figure 3 Poster developed by CPAWS to encourage the Canadian public to vote to end commercial development in Banff National Park. Photo courtesy of Harvey Locke.

ada (Locke 1993). Largely spearheaded by the World Wildlife Fund in partnership with CPAWS, an Endangered Spaces Campaign was launched in 1989 with the express goal of moving from 2.95% of Canada in protected areas to at least 12% by 2000 (Hummel 1989). Over 600,000 people signed the Canadian Wilderness Charter, which supported the campaign's goals.

Results of the ten-year effort varied across the country, but the total protected areas estate in Canada more than doubled in 10 years from 2.95% to 6.84% (MacNamee 2008). Notable successes occurred in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and, despite a discouraging start, Ontario. Some good results were obtained in Alberta as well. A similar 12% goal was embraced by the Mike Harcourt provincial government in British Columbia, where a widespread and vigorous civil society movement existed that included the Sierra Club, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Valhalla Wilderness Society, B.C. Spaces for Nature, the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, and CPAWS. British Columbia achieved its target of 12% protection during the decade. It is important to emphasize here that while governments did the job, it was the sustained push from civil society that resulted in doubling the amount of Canada that was protected in parks and other protected areas. Jean Chrétien, when he was minister responsible for parks in 1970, said it well:

> We will need even more public support than we have if our parkland is to meet the needs of the future. It won't be enough for those concerned to be content with telling each other how they feel. Politicians must *know* that the public wants more parks. Those in government who control the purse strings must me persuaded that park needs are a real and vital priority.

Moving from protecting "island parks" to large landscape conservation

The "12% at least" target was based on "representation," the idea that characteristic samples of all natural regions of the country should be preserved (Hummel 1989). But as the Endangered Spaces campaign was unfolding, the emerging science of conservation biology was convincingly demonstrating that island protected areas were not adequate to hold their ecological values through time. The facts were plain that 12% of the landscape is not enough to

maintain ecological processes and viable populations of wide-ranging species. The target of 12% presented the risk of becoming a cap that would ensure conservation failure if protected area efforts stopped because of "over-representation."

Conservation biology gave rise to a civil society effort to conserve interconnected conservation areas at a North American scale led by The Wildlands Project, whose founders included notable conservation biologists. The Wildlands Project and CPAWS came together in 1993 with many scientists and other civil society groups to create the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative (www.y2y.net). Y2Y's goal is to enable nature to function at scale and allow species such as grizzly bears to flourish along with humanity over the long term by ensuring connectivity between the region's emblematic parks and wilderness areas and the creation of new parks, especially in the north (Locke 1994, 1997). Y2Y is a civil society-driven project that has drawn widespread support from NGOs and philanthropies and attracted international attention (Chester 2006; Worboys et al., in press). The Y2Y idea helped to inspire the creation of the Muskwa–Kechika Management Area in British Columbia's Northern Rockies in the late 1990s. Covering 6.3 million hectares, the management area is mix of new wilderness parks embedded in a matrix of special management zones intended to protect wilderness and wildlife for the long term (Sawchuk 2004).

In the late 1990s, British Columbia citizen activists organized a campaign to protect the fjords, salmon streams, and unlogged watersheds of the mid-coast. Cleverly rebranding the area as the Great Bear Rainforest, they secured important philanthropic support from a variety of American philanthropic foundations and ran a very successful public engagement campaign in the Lower Mainland media. In tandem, some activist groups targeted the international markets of forest products companies to prevent further logging of the area. First Nations were also successfully engaged and a model was created that not only addressed their conservation interests but also their economic needs. A conservation area design based on conservation biology principles was developed to provide a rationale for the scale of conservation sought. Despite the British Columbia government's election platform of "no new parks," it became very interested in conservation of the area. About CDN$60 million was raised from American and Canadian philanthropic supporters and finally in January 2008 the government of Canada made a financial contribution that sealed the deal.

The result was a conservation matrix that covered an area of 8.75 million hectares and created 110 "conservancies" over about one-third of the area. These conservancies are a new form of protected area that was established under a 2006 amendment to the Parks Act, the Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act. The conservancies are set aside to protect and maintain their biological diversity and natural environment; preserve and maintain social, ceremonial, and cultural uses of First Nations; protect and maintain their recreational values; and ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with those purposes. A park use permit may be issued to authorize certain uses that, in the opinion of the provincial minister of the environment, will not restrict, prevent, or inhibit the development, improvement, or use of the conservancy in accordance with the purpose for which it was set aside. However, commercial logging, mining, and large-scale hydroelectric power generation are expressly prohibited. A complex,

multi-faceted Great Bear Rainforest Agreement was also signed. Steps remain to fulfill all aspects of the agreements, such as conservancy management planning, the enactment of biodiversity areas, and establishing a regional plan for conservation outside of protected areas (see www.savethegreatbear.org).

At the end the 1990s, Pew Charitable Trusts, a foundation based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which had previously supported conservation work in British Columbia and elsewhere in the world, developed a strong interest in international boreal forest conservation and launched the International Boreal Conservation Campaign (www.interboreal.org). Working with Canadians, Pew also launched the Canadian Boreal Initiative (www.borealcanada.ca). Together, they developed a Boreal Forest Conservation Framework that has now been signed onto by many NGOs, First Nations, and businesses. Its goal is to protect at least 50% of the boreal forest and ensure that world-class standards are applied to extractive activities on the rest. This is based on the best scientific information available about what truly effective conservation would require (Schmiegelow 2006). It has been successful in enabling important conservation outcomes working with First Nations communities, NGOs, and government (see discussion below).

By 2008, most of Canada's national NGOs with an interest in conservation had embraced the goal of protecting at least 50% of Canada's remaining wild areas and begun advocating for it publicly (www.tomorrowtodaycanada.ca).

Ecological integrity and Canada's national parks

On the parks integrity front, the success of the Banff–Bow Valley study and its wide acceptance by the public gave rise to a Canada-wide study of our national parks. The Panel on the Ecological Integrity of the National Parks of Canada was composed of academics, public servants, First Nations, and civil society members who looked into the national park system as a whole and found it wanting. It recommended a greatly increased investment in science and amendments to the National Parks Act to ensure the unquestioned primacy of ecological integrity in all aspects of park decision-making. Inspired in part by the Yellowstone to Yukon idea, the panel also recommended that we move from considering parks as islands to managing parks in networks. This 1999 report was accepted and implemented to a significant degree (Parks Canada Agency 2000). A few years later, after going through a public consultation process, Ontario also upgraded its provincial parks legislation to make ecological integrity the priority for its first-class network of parks.

Thus the 21st century began with civil society playing a renewed and vigorous role in shaping both park management and new park creation.

Challenges and opportunities lie ahead

Canada's international obligations have remained unfulfilled to date Canada is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which obliges all parties to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Civil soci-

ety has been remarkably silent about our responsibilities under this convention, in contrast to the intense public discussion about the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

The CBD's far-sighted Program of Work on Protected Areas sets out an effective blueprint for action on the world's protected areas (CBD 2005) with important reporting deadlines in 2010 and 2012. Even though Canada is doing one of the better jobs of interim reporting under the convention, we are far behind in achieving the goals of the program of work, particularly with marine protected areas. (Indeed, our record in marine conservation is appalling, with less than 1% of our waters protected despite the catastrophic decline in cod and salmon stocks we have witnessed in the last two decades.) Canada's performance under the Convention on Biological Diversity should be the focus of greater civil society interest and engagement. Given our wealth and protected areas experience, Canada should also take a lead in assisting developing nations with their protected areas.

The courts have been slow to recognize the obvious primacy of civil society Strangely, it took our courts a long time to overcome the inherent bias in our legal and economic system in favor of private ownership as opposed to recognizing the primary interest of civil society in protected areas. Thus in 1972, a citizen named Larry Green was refused standing (which means the right to bring a case to court) in his effort to stop a commercial gravel operation adjacent to Sandbanks Provincial Park, Ontario. But in the late 1980s the law of standing was loosened. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (now called Ecojustice) was opened in the early 1990s as a public-interest law firm and its first big project was to work with CPAWS to sue the minister of the environment to stop logging in Wood Buffalo National Park. The suit was resolved by a consent judgment declaring logging illegal and invalid in national parks (Locke and Elgie 1995). Here, CPAWS's standing was not even challenged. But in 1993 when CPAWS sued Sunshine Village ski hill and the minister of environment, its standing was challenged. The federal court of appeal ultimately ruled that CPAWS did have standing to sue, noting that "CPAWS has demonstrated, early in the process, a genuine interest as a public interest group. The primary objective of CPAWS and its members is to preserve the integrity of the ecosystem in Canada's parks and wilderness areas." Finally at end of the 20th century, civil society was recognized as having a right to sue in Canadian courts to protect the public interest in parks and protected areas.

The principle of public ownership and civil society's legal standing to defend that right have become so quickly enshrined that in 2006, when the government of Quebec wanted to sell off parts of Mount Orford National Park (as noted above, Quebec calls its provincially established parks "national" parks) to promote condominium development, allegedly to stimulate economic activity, they either had to amend the Parks Act to remove the lands from the park or else face a lawsuit. The minister of the environment resigned in protest over the amendment legislation. The privatization of this civil society asset triggered a massive public reaction that included 10,000 people marching in protest through the streets of Montreal (Figure 4). A spontaneous grassroots group, SOS parc Orford, formed to lead the fight (www.sosparcorford.org). It became an election issue. The new minority government backed off substantially due to the public reaction but the issue remains in play. The strong public reaction to privatizing part of Mount Orford Park also killed a similar proposal for

Figure 4 On April 22, 2006, ten thousand people marched in the streets of Montreal to protest removal of part of Quebec's Mont Orford provinical park for condominium development. Photo courtesy of La Société pour la nature et parcs du Canada.

housing on valuable lands at the edge of Montreal in Isle de Boucherville National Park. Similarly, strong public engagement has encouraged the Quebec government to make major advances, including establishing a Roster of Protected Areas that ensures proper standards for its protected areas. The percentage of Quebec's surface in protected area status has moved from 0.67% in 1999 to 8.12% in 2009, with promises of further action (Beauchamp 2008; Charest 2009).

Aboriginal rights have created an important new interest in protected areas In the last 30 years, first peoples' rights have been recognized through jurisprudence and the Constitution Act of 1982. These rights have important implications for protected areas, particularly in regions where new treaties are negotiated. In some protected areas, this gives the relevant aboriginal group standing of equivalence to civil society along with unique rights of harvest that are subject to the public interest in conservation. In others, such as the new conservancies established by the British Columbia government under the Great Bear Rainforest deal, aboriginal rights could be argued to be senior to civil society's interest. When these important aboriginal rights have been exercised in conjunction with civil society support, good things have resulted for protected areas.

The successful 1980s campaign to protect South Moresby Island in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve had significant leadership from the Haida and wide support from NGOs

that elevated it to a national issue. It has had positive long-term consequences. The Haida now play a major role in park management. In the marine environment, the Haida and the federal government have recently negotiated a memorandum of understanding to create a marine protected area in the Bowie Seamount, which has been a focus of CPAWS campaign work in conjunction with the Haida (www.cpawsbc.org). Building on the national park reserve, the Haida have also recently achieved protection of nearly half their homeland through a combination of court challenges and negotiations with the province of British Columbia to create new conservancies (British Columbia and Council of the Haida Nation 2007).

In April 2008, the Sahtu people agreed with Canada to withdraw from mineral exploitation 7,600 square kilometers in the headwaters of the South Nahanni River for the proposed Nááts'ihch'oh National Park that would abut the newly expanded Nahanni National Park (about which more below; see also Parks Canada Agency 2008). If all goes well, the two new parks would protect 99% of the South Nahanni watershed and the adjacent karstlands in national parks, totaling about 39,000 square kilometers, which would be one of world's greatest parks.

The Dehcho First Nations have also advanced a land-use plan that calls for protection of about half their traditional area as part of their treaty negotiations with Canada. As of April 2008, the amount of protected areas they seek is 25% in federal protected areas (part of which is Nahanni) and 24% in other conservation areas (www.dehcholands.org).

Other recent events in the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories show the power of effective collaboration between aboriginal peoples and civil society groups. The federal government's 2007 announcement of interim protection for the East Arm of Great Slave Lake for a national park, other nearby lands called Akaitcho, and also the Ramparts wetlands for a national wildlife area, totaled over 100,000 square kilometers. Earlier in the year a new national historic site was created on two peninsulas (Sahoue and Edacho) of Great Bear Lake (Baird 2007). While government departments such as Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service did important work on the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy, this protection was accomplished in significant measure because of collaborations between First Nations communities and Ducks Unlimited, World Wildlife Fund, and CPAWS, with national co-ordination through the Canadian Boreal Initiative. Together, these new sites amount to one of the largest conservation announcements in Canadian history (Parks Canada 2007), though some more "after-sales service" is needed before they can be considered permanently protected.

Two direct examples of an agenda set by civil society entering directly into public policy occurred in 2008. Premier Dalton McGuinty of Ontario announced in July that at least half of that province's vast Far North would be protected. A land use planning process is being developed with that policy at the center; the intended result is that about 225,000 sq km of boreal forest, wetlands and tundra will be protected. Then in November 2008, during the provincial election campaign which his party won, Quebec Premier Jean Charest promised to protect at least half of Quebec north of the 49th parallel. This amounts to 70% of the province; the area protected would cover approximately 500,000 square kilometers, an area about the size of France. The combined effect of conservation at this scale in Ontario and

Quebec will be among the largest conservation actions in human history. Ontario initiated a bill in June , the Far North Act, that calls for "at least 225,000 square kilometers of the Far North in an interconnected network of protected areas" through a planning process that involves First Nations communities, but it has not yet passed. Quebec has yet to create its legal framework.

Nahanni expansion confirms the primacy of civil society and the role of aboriginal people in Canada's new parks

The expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve from 4,766 to over 30,000 square kilometers by special act of Parliament in June 2009 was not only a remarkable act of conservation that created one of the world's largest and most spectacular parks, but also confirmed the primacy of civil society and the role of aboriginal people in Canada's new national parks.

The park enlargement followed a seven-year campaign for the expansion of the existing Nahanni National Park Reserve in order to protect the entire South Nahanni watershed and adjoining karstlands. As noted above, the Dehcho had determined in 1999 that they wanted the entire watershed protected and there were adjacent globally significant karstlands of great conservation interest. The Dehcho invited CPAWS to work with them to achieve protection of all of it. The public campaign, led by CPAWS, included the Dehcho, scientists, a major outdoor gear retail cooperative, and river outfitters. The collective effort included a cross-country speaking tour that went to nineteen cities.

The first success was the 2002 announcement by Prime Minister Chrétien that the park expansion would form part of Parks Canada's action plan, but the size of the expansion was unspecified. The next major success came in August 2007, when Prime Minister Stephen Harper flew to spectacular Virginia Falls on the South Nahanni River (Figure 5) to announce a "massive" but still unspecified park expansion (Harper and Baird 2007). But that was not the end of it.

Despite a year of determined effort, Environment Minister John Baird could not get a boundary established before a federal election intervened. This is because in Canada there is often a lag between the public announcement of a plan and the enabling legislative outcome. This lag period is a critical time for civil society engagement, for it is often at this stage that special commercial interests such as the mining industry seek to restrict or avoid a final outcome through the political and bureaucratic process. The Nahanni was no exception. CPAWS in particular engaged in a great deal of "after-sales service" to see that the commitment was kept and that the public interest in the largest expansion possible was served. It was not until June 2009 that a bill specifying the size of the expansion was introduced in the Canadian Parliament (Locke 2009). But it moved quickly through the legislative process into law with unanimous agreement because strong public support had been demonstrated and the Dehcho First Nations were so clearly supportive.

Two passages from the parliamentary debates on the Nahanni expansion are illustrative of the primacy of civil society and the aboriginal interest in Canada's new national parks. The bill's sponsor in Parliament, Conservative Environment Minister Jim Prentice, said at Second Reading "the Nahanni is central to our identity as a people, is central to our identity as

Figure 5 Virginia Falls on the South Nahanni River, part of Nahanni National Park Preserve. It was here that the prime minister announced a major expansion of the park. Photo courtesy of Harvey Locke.

a country" and concluded that the park expansion "is in effect the Dehcho's and Canada's gift to humanity." At Second Reading of the Nahanni Bill in the Senate, Liberal Senator Grant Mitchell described the fundamental connection between the efforts of civil society and the national parks of Canada: the public campaign "reflects the deep relationship Canadians have with wildlife, with ecosystems, with the outdoors of our country. I think there are times when we all too easily take that for granted. We forget how important our wildlife and surroundings are to us—the magnitude of the beauty, the depth of the beauty, the remarkable and wonderful nature that Canadians enjoy. This park is a very important step in capturing that nature and in preserving one of the most important and significantly beautiful areas of this country for Canadians."

The future

The natural world is unraveling. While Canada has created some of the world's finest protected areas, they are not adequate to save our part of life on Earth. Twenty-first-century challenges such as climate change, habitat fragmentation, species extinction, and ocean fisheries depletion require an organized and forceful response from civil society centered on protecting at least half of Canada's wilderness lands and waters in effectively managed and interconnected protected areas.

One such effort is the newly launched Big Wild campaign, a shared effort of the Mountain Equipment Coop, which has retail stores across Canada and 2.7 million members, and CPAWS, which has volunteers and staff across the country. The campaign aims to build the public constituency for those goals through a variety of citizen engagement techniques, including an interactive website (www.thebigwild.org). It will take this kind of effort and much more from civil society if we are to do what needs to be done with protected areas.

Recent scientific research has shown that Canada's wilderness is a vast storehouse of carbon and that nature conservation is a first-order strategy in the effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Canada is a signatory to two global conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity but actions under the two are fragmented and far behind schedule despite the urgency of the warming climate and the extinction crisis. Canada should be part of a major initiative to ensure that the actions under the two conventions are linked and accelerated (Locke and Mackey 2009).

The words of Canada's first parks commissioner, J.B. Harkin, are still relevant: "What is needed in Canada today is an informed public opinion which will voice an indignant protest against any vulgarization of the beauty of our national parks or any invasion of their sanctity. Negative or passive good will that does nothing is of little use. We need fierce loyalties to back action." We need to take those words even further today. It is time for civil society to elevate protected areas to the center of Canada's public agenda.

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