

108-ER

Articles, news, information,
humour — all from your
neighbours on the 108.

NEWSLETTER OF THE 108 MILE RANCH COMMUNITY

Winter-Spring 2006

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108 GREENBELT COMMISSION

KEEPING THE GREENBELT GREEN

The Commission's 2005 work program has just about come to an end (all that remains is to burn some slash piles) and it is appropriate to provide a year-end report and indicate possible future directions. In addition to the usual trail maintenance, thistle control and pasture activities, there was this past year an unprecedented level of tree cutting and removal in several forested areas of the Greenbelt, and this will be the focus of our report.

The reason for all this activity is well understood. It is a response to the very significant concerns the community has expressed with respect to the risk of a serious interface wildfire on the 108. The concerns voiced by the community — in public meetings and in letters and presentations to the Commission — point to the lessons learned from the major fires that occurred in the Thompson Okanagan in 2003 and to the significant concentrations of beetle killed pines in several areas of the Greenbelt. The Commission received a strong mandate to take immediate action to reduce risk levels.

This has been a difficult challenge. All commissioners are residents of the community and share with other residents an enjoyment of the Greenbelt and a reluctance to do anything that would change the Greenbelt lands or reduce their value to residents and wildlife. At the same time, however, commissioners have a responsibility to help protect the community from the devastation of a serious interface wildfire - recognizing, however, that no matter what action is taken there will always be some risk.

The Commission was fortunate this past year to receive federal funding to reduce forest fuel levels in several areas of the Greenbelt. These include (but are not limited to) the area around West Beach, the Block Drive booster station and the east side of Walker Valley adjacent to Block Drive (where fallen logs were removed by helicopter in order to protect this steeply sloping terrain and the wetlands below it). In addition, the Commission hired a commercial contractor to remove concentrations of dead pines on the west side of Walker Valley. These



The Commission decided to remove these trees by helicopter in order to avoid damage to the steep hillside in this area, as well as to the Valley's grasslands and wetlands.

are areas that were identified in a 1991 108 Greenbelt Fire Hazard Report as having the highest risk, as well as areas that more recently have had the

— **cont. on page 7**

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Three decades ago, the Greenbelt system was set up using the *Sanctuary Land Use Plan*, designating the natural plants and animals and ecosystems they comprised to be protected for all time. A simple nature train was instituted so that locals and visitors alike could appreciate this precious resource at close hand in a peaceful setting where motor vehicles of any kind were forbidden.

Unfortunately, a few years ago, the protection which formed the cornerstone of the mandate was withdrawn. A development-driven *Ornamental Land Use Plan* was then increasingly substituted for the original land-use plan though completely alien to it.

This has increasingly jeopardized the sanctuary which now lies in tatters, shredded by heavy equipment, power tools and trampling. The woodland floor which supports not only wild flowers and shrubs but also mosses, lichens and liverworts has been denuded as part of some *tidying up* procedure. The sage-grasslands which used to spread unbroken between the lakes have been increasingly carved up into ecologically-meaningless islands. The wide spectrum of life the small mammals and birds, snakes, amphibians, butterflies, bees and a myriad of insects which the sanctuary was designed to protect will inevitably decrease or vanish altogether.

The most damage has been done in the Wetland Ecosystem where the vitally-essential buffer zones around the core wetlands have been mowed down.

In reply to some of Mr. Koreberg's complaints the Greenbelt Commission suggested, "Probably only Mother Nature can fully address those issues." This is the precise concept behind all of the greenbelt lands in a nutshell: Let Mother Nature have full sway and protect and cherish her handiwork. If we do that we will have a unique and precious facility envied by people world-wide. — John Courtney

Dear Editor.

A disparity exists between residents of 108 Mile Ranch concerning management of Greenbelt Lands. Some believe this Legacy must be preserved as an original nature reserve without invasion by gas motors, logging, grass cutting, burning, path widening and weed removal — save for real public safety factors; others feel that current intrusions are consistent with good management.

A review by a third party of all legal Covenants contained in land transfers and an examination of original 108 Greenbelt Land intent by Henry Block reflected in his *A Community in Partnership With Nature*, plus reassessment of the original 108 Greenbelt Land Bylaws, is overdue.

My article, *The Web of Life*, drew favourable attention. Key questions related to recent devastations in the guise of fire protection. On the other hand, numerous sentiments espoused the status quo or the need for still more tree, bush and noxious weed removals.

Advice from experts to guide local authorities in future 108 Greenbelt Land plans and the protection of the fragile incubator-bird sanctuary of Walker Valley has been published. Sound opinions perhaps, but more relevant to a regional forest, not a rare and protected Greenbelt nature sanctuary. Let a thorough review of legal constraints, not opinion, guide the future. — Herb Korenberg

Dear Editor,

The Web of Life article by Mr. Korenberg is a fair evaluation of the current situation at 108 Mile Ranch. However, based upon the recent history of mismanagement by the 108 Greenbelt Commission, it is unlikely to produce an epiphany of understanding of what is meant by a Greenbelt sanctuary as opposed to a park.

Allow me to turn to just one area — the two large 'lagoons' opposite Chilcotin Crescent. Based on a report by resident Bonnie Winter from notes taken at a walkabout by habitat biologist, Roger Packham, I faxed to Mr. Packham an examination of those findings from my own extensive records of lake levels, sources, usage patterns and involvement with numerous Greenbelt projects over the last 30 years.

I recommended that both the lagoons be reopened to 108 Lake by dredging the blocked entrances, thus restoring circulation of water, fish and natural ingredients. Inasmuch as the two bodies of stagnant water now are weed-choked and unsightly, and are the largest mosquito breeding areas in the 108 Greenbelt lands, I would follow Mr. Packham's suggestions that this be accomplished simultaneous to the Greenbelt Commission's scheduled Spring 2006 replacement of both weakened bridges, thereby using the machinery brought in for both purposes. Roger Packham saw no reason to withhold the required permit.

Lake levels are on a downward trend and are likely to stay extremely low for the foreseeable future.

— Neill Duncan

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We invite your submissions, comments and letters for future publications. We reserve the right to edit for accuracy, space and clarity. We request that all submissions and letters be signed by the author and contain an address and telephone number.

Be A Member:

To become a member of the 108 Ranch Community Association, you must be a landowner or renter of property in the 108 Mile Ranch. Members can submit and vote resolutions in accordance with the RCA Constitution. Absentee landowners/members are permitted one vote per property owned. Members can serve on the Board of Directors of the RCA.

Annual memberships cost \$10.00 per household. Please contact Al Blannin at 791-5757 to register your membership. Or complete the form, enclose your membership fee and mail to 108 Ranch Community Association at the above address.

108 RCA Membership Request

Cost: One Yr. family	\$10.00
Five-Yr family	\$35.00
Lifetime family	\$50.00

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____



— by Bonnie Winter

In the late 1990's, it was widely believed that our two lakes were in trouble. Many long time residents reported an increase in aquatic plants and were concerned about the health of our two lakes.

The RCA responded to these concerns and moved forward with a plan to find out what was going on. They joined the BC Lake Stewardship Society (BCLSS) in 1999 and enlisted the help of the Ministry of Environment and local volunteers to collect water quality data on 108 and Sepa Lakes.

Although everyone was expecting the worst, the data was surprisingly good news. Water quality in 108 Lake in the period from 1976 to 2002 had not changed and in Sepa Lake it had improved. The data didn't answer the question about why there were more plants in the lakes, but further research provided answers about why water quality had remained stable.

The 2004 report on the lakes, a joint project of BCLSS and the Ministry of Environment, names two main factors responsible for the remarkable stability. One factor is the marl feature of 108 Lake, a complex chemistry that results in phosphorus binding with calcium chloride in the hard water and falling to the bottom, becoming part of the lake sediment and inaccessible to plants.

The other feature named in the report is the buffer zone of natural vegetation around the lakes. The reason it's called a buffer zone is because it serves as a natural barrier between human activities and the lake. Shoreline vegetation sops up runoff from private property that often

contains nutrients and toxins put on the ground in the way of lawn and garden fertilizers, pesticides, storm water, road salt, etc. Septic leachate and runoff are filtered and slowed by shoreline vegetation. Natural vegetation prevents shoreline erosion and is home to more abundant and diverse plant and animal life than upland areas. The report had good news for us about our lakes, and it also contained important advice about maintaining the buffer zone as an effective ally in maintaining water quality.

As our community grows, as more properties are developed, the buffer zone becomes increasingly important. My neighbourhood, Chilcotin Crescent, is a case in point. The neighbourhood has been designed with relatively dense housing on a small piece of land jutting into the lake. The buffer zone is narrow compared to other

Although shorelines are meant to be enjoyed and some human impact has to be expected, it's possible to both enjoy the shoreline and keep our impact to a minimum.

areas around the lake and is sparsely vegetated, most likely due to the poor rocky soil. With a sunny exposure and easy access to the lake, there is considerable human activity and development in the buffer zone. Paths, beaches, benches, wharfs, boat storage, and swimming platforms are common and contribute to loss of vegetation and even erosion. Although shorelines are meant to be enjoyed and some human impact has to be expected, it's possible to both enjoy the shoreline and keep our impact to a minimum.

A major concern to me is the recent removal of grasses and shrubs on the lake edge to accommodate a bench. It's a great place to pause and gaze out at the lake, but it's an exposed location and the removal of plants has placed the shoreline at high risk of erosion.

What concerns me most however is the excessive shoreline mowing by the Greenbelt Commission. Last summer in particular, extensive areas adjacent to the lake path, including shrubs and small trees, were mowed to the edges of the lake embankments. The porous soil of Chilcotin Crescent, deprived of shade and overly exposed to the sun became even more inhospitable to important shoreline vegetation.

As population and development increases at the
— cont. on page 6

ICE DANGERS

With warmer winters and spring looming our lake ice is not always safe. These stories are important to me personally as someone who has had the experience of falling through the ice.



I've included my own ice story (next page) even though 2 years old, as an experience which could help someone else. I was named everything from an idiot to a heroine for what I did but when you are in shock you are not thinking rationally so I would say that neither description fits. Instinct and action took over from what anyone

might say I should have done.

I have never seen a technique for getting out of an ice hole without aid of rescuer or tools, but if there are any out there I'd like to know of them. I had to create my own.

Mainly, the point of these stories is to keep both pets and people from falling through the ice!

It was a huge personal relief to me to know that our VFD is trained in ice rescue now. But they have to first find out that you are in the ice, ya know? Elvis is still with his people today because of our VFD but never think this won't happen to you — unless your dog is on leash.

I hope you find these articles useful and that you keep your dogs on leash, particularly when the ice is not safe.

— Maddi Newman

Elvis

— By Ann Swann

Elvis, an 11-year-old, 100-pound Rottweiler, is alive and well. He still gets his regular walks around the Sepa Lake — now on a leash. Three months ago, when he was running free, he startled a fox out of the reeds. The fox led him a merry chase out onto the ice and Elvis went through.

His master, Bruce, took a few tentative steps onto the ice and stopped, realizing this was a job he couldn't do for his friend. "The toughest thing was to leave him — to go and get help," Bruce says.

"Of all the doors he could have come to, he came to mine — and I'm with the Fire Department," Liz Rae recalls. While Bruce went

back to his dog, Liz phoned 911. It was dark and there was a mist rising, so voices bounced all over the place. However, Liz was able to locate the position and direct the fire trucks when they arrived.

The rescue was later viewed by Chief Ian Henderson as good practice — in a real life and death situation — an opportunity to employ ice rescue skills learned the previous winter.

Elvis had hung on. He had clung to the lip of broken ice with his paws for fifty frigid minutes. "That's the miracle," says Bruce, who wants to put the whole terrifying drama behind him. "Dog owners beware," he cautions. "These things can happen, especially in the Spring and Fall."

As for Elvis? "It wouldn't have been a fair way to go after eleven happy years. It was just a question of timing, and it has a happy ending."



Ice Stories Told Along the Trail



In early spring, several years ago, a moose chased a medium-small dog out onto the ice of 108 Lake, as the dog's mistress stood helpless on the shore, waiting for one or both to go through the ice. Thankfully, the moose must have figured he'd taught the dog a lesson, because he soon turned and trotted away.

Shortly before Christmas 2005, a woman fell through the ice at the canoe dock, breaking a rib. She was subsequently told there is a spring in that part of the lake. Needless to say, the rib still hurts.

Historic Strength-of- Ice Guide

- 2 inches — Will Support a man
- 4 inches — Will support a man on horseback
- 5 inches — Will support an 80 pounder gun
- 8 inches — Will support a battery of artillery with carriages and horses attached.
- 10 inches — Will support an army

Chief Ian Henderson cautions that ices varies in strength. Ice with bubbles in it is much weaker than clear ice — and snow insulates ice, keeping it warmer.

— by Maddi Newman

April 11, 2004. It happened so fast. As I watched, she went through the ice. It looked like she was going to get out, but the ice broke as she was trying to climb. She kept trying and I kept calling to her while I was making my way down the hill to the shore. By the time I got to the bottom she had stopped trying.

I knew the water was deep where she went through and the ice obviously quite thin if it couldn't hold the weight of a 70-lb dog. But there she was, hanging on by her front legs looking at me, waiting for me to help. Shock makes people do irrational things.

I started out, knowing I might fall through but at the same time thinking that wasn't going to happen. As I got closer to her I got on my belly to distribute my weight. But as I grabbed her collar and tried to pull her towards me, the ice broke and in I went. Tinga swam to me and was trying to get out again. At this point I was in shock and not sure this was going to work. My clothes were pulling me down; it was hard to move. I was still trying to lift her out but of course that made me sink. I rested, "got a grip" (psychologically) and then tried getting her out again but I couldn't do it with one hand and keep above the water surface myself. We kept trying.

Several times I calmed myself down and got my breathing under control so I could think. I got the idea to move closer to her and bend my knee up so that she had something to push up on with her back legs. It worked and she got out. Then I had to concentrate

on getting myself out. But she was worried about me and kept coming up to me even though I was yelling at her to "go back." She went on the ice around the hole trying to get to me from the back and fell through the ice again! She swam to me and I did the same trick using my knee for her to lift out with her back legs. This time she stayed back.

I tried to lift myself up and forward onto the ice but it was impossible. (See the TV ads about having those ice picks with you when on ice!) I called for help several times but no one was around, and calling for help just made me panic. That was the moment I thought that maybe it was my time. I calmed myself down again but was getting tired and very cold by then. I realized I had no help, had to think my way out of this all on my own. "Calm down. Control the breathing. Now think. Think. Think," I told myself.

I got the idea to gently paddle my legs up so that my body lay horizontal along the surface. (Moving around in water when fully clothed tends to pull you down so I had to be slow and careful.) I tried to move the left side of my body to the right edge of the ice hole where I could hook my left foot over on the ice to hold my body at the horizontal position. The first try broke the ice. The second try worked. I worked part of the left side of my body over the edge of the ice and very gently wriggled myself as close as I could. Using my right arm, shoulder and head

— cont. next page

Tinga

— from previous page

as leverage, I rolled over onto my back ending up half on ice, half sticking out over the water. As I did that I could feel the ice breaking again but it held enough for me to do a quick but careful second roll onto my stomach. I was out! Then I belly-crawled a good 6 feet or so before daring to stand up. I got Tinga's leash on her and headed back to the shore, up the prickly, brush-filled hill, down the path and to the car.

We went back to the scene a few hours later with Jeffrey and took a few pictures. I was glad to be alive and certainly glad I didn't lose my little dog that day.

Moral of the story: No matter what season, we now never walk along the lake without my dog being leashed. She has adapted to this and is fine with it. Ice is a distinct danger but probably not the only danger to your dog if it is not under your control.



The photo shows the ice hole where Tinga & Maddi fell through the ice. Don't try this. Call for help. Better still, don't let it happen. Keep your pet on a leash.

Lake News

— cont. from page 3

108, I hope our community does not lose sight of the important link between water quality and natural vegetation. I would especially like to see the Greenbelt Commission, as manager of the buffer zone, acknowledge its role as a player in the preservation of water quality in our lakes. Building trails and providing benches are important community services, but without healthy lakes and shorelines, lakeside trails and benches will have little value.

Many levels of government have recognized the importance of buffer zones to water quality in lakes and regulations are becoming more common. I am delighted to see the CRD has put buffer zone requirements in place for new development around lakes.

Also, the RCA deserves high praise for taking a huge leap forward in caring for our two lakes. Although the RCA no longer belongs to BCLSS, their 1999 initiative still goes on. Local residents have taken responsibility for continued lake monitoring and maintaining contacts with both BCLSS and the Ministry of Environment.

The R.C.A. Applies for Funding From the Northern Initiative Development Fund

On February 2005 an initial request for funding was submitted and approved in principle.

Recently the application was updated and resubmitted.

The funding request is for a grant to finance improvements to the 108 Community Hall and surrounding area.

This project involves the following:

1. Replacing the 20 year old roof of the Hall
2. Replacing the existing furnaces with high efficiency gas-fired furnaces
3. Replacing the commercial dishwasher
4. Resealcoating the parking lot and adding curbing around the plated areas.
5. Upgrading the landscaping and installing underground sprinklers.
6. Painting the interior of the Hall.

The NID Board will review the updated application on January 24th, 2006

The total sum required is \$67,500 plus tax.

Unfortunately the conditions for eligibility for a grant have recently changed. There is now a requirement that the project for which funding is requested, must clearly be linked to sustainable economic development and/or growth in one of the following areas:

- Forestry
- Pine Beetle Recovery
- Transportation
- Tourism
- Mining
- Olympic Opportunities
- Small Business
- Economic Development
- Energy and Agriculture

The RCA is keeping its fingers crossed!

Keeping the Greenbelt Green

— cont. from page 1

most significant mountain pine beetle infestations.

In undertaking this work the Commission invited independent recommendations and assessments from three respected local biology (Kristi Iverson) and forestry professionals (Chris Betuzzi and Darren Wilkinson). Their full reports are available online to anyone who is interested. Each was very supportive of the work that has been done, reporting that fire hazards and risks in the addressed areas have been significantly reduced, that disturbance levels to the adjacent grasslands have been minimal and that high aesthetic values have been maintained.

However, all three recommended that the Commission should take a more aggressive approach, selectively thinning coniferous forests in order to further reduce fire risks and at the same time recreate conditions more similar to those that occurred prior to European settlement, a time when fires frequently

swept through the area. Without the benefit of these fires, fuel loadings have in some areas become extreme, forests have encroached on grasslands and have sometimes become so thick they are choking themselves out to the point they are unhealthy. Such action, they point out, should make the forests more resilient to future forest pest outbreaks, and also provide the best habitat for local wildlife since these are the conditions in which they evolved.

The Commission recognizes that such action, if undertaken on a broad scale, would require public consultation and a public meeting will be held to fully discuss the matter before any decision is made. Recognizing that it is difficult to visualize what our Greenbelt forests would look like if they are restored to their historical appearance, a small demonstration area has been created to reflect what our consultants have recommended. It is the area around the Block Drive booster station. Previously

this area was so overgrown that it was virtually impenetrable in places. Now local residents have begun to include it in their walks. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to take a look and provide feedback to the Commission.

The Greenbelt Commission is seeking to obtain more current research on which to base future fire hazard reduction programs and has applied for another HRDC grant in order to carry on this work in 2006. In addition, the CRD has obtained a grant to undertake a pilot project on the 108 Greenbelt. It will promote public awareness and education and demonstrate such fuel reduction methods as fuel breaks, spacing and ladder fuel removal, crown cover reduction and mechanical harvesting.

Watch for notice this spring of a public meeting where future strategies and initiatives will be presented and discussed.

108 Greenbelt Commission

108 Children's Christmas Party Sponsored by the RCA and Lions

On Sunday Dec. 4th anyone wandering into the 108 Community Hall between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. might have wondered if there was any organization to the confusion. They'd have been forgiven that as approximately 125 young people partied. The children enjoyed having their faces painted; they decorated cookies, made crafts and colouring as they waited their turn to visit Santa. While having a chance to chat with Santa the children had their photos taken. All the children received a goody bag, a teddy bear and a balloon. (Unfortunately the helium tank was only full enough to blow up 35 balloons.)

Thanks again to all the volunteers who gladly gave much more than asked. Some of the adults appeared to be having as much fun as the children. I enjoyed having had the opportunity to help put a smile on the children's faces at this time of year.

— Jackie Belcham

Some highlights from decisions and reports at the past year's RCA Board Meetings (in no particular order):

* **Survey** taken at Bingo indicates that a majority of those attending (including many non-smokers) prefer smoking to be allowed.

* **Hall rentals** were down in 2005.

* **New RCA membership subscriptions** are arriving, in response to the current membership drive.

* **Pat Babineau and Gwen Colwell** retired from Bingo. Our heartfelt thanks to them both for many years of inspired volunteering!

* **Road** to the beach was graded.

* **New (to us) chairs** were purchased for Community Hall.

* **Print run** for 108-er

newsletter increased from 700 to 800 to provide mailed copies for RCA members and to fill increasing demand. Note: all issues are available on the web site. A copy is being provided for the 100 Mile House Public Library.

* **General upgrades** were done to the Main Beach area this past summer, aided by volunteer help.

Meetings, on the first Wednesday of the month, are now held at The 108 Café, courtesy of board member, Maggie Pugh. Your input to the RCA Executive board is always welcome — by mail, e-mail or in person (phone first).

BINGO



108 MILE RANCH COMMUNITY BINGO

Every Friday of the year the doors of the 108 Community Hall are opened at 5:30 pm with Bingo starting at 7:15 pm.

There is a Progressive Bingo with an accumulating total until it is won. Then it starts over again.

A concession, operated by the 108 Mile Ranch Community Association, is open with coffee, soft drinks, and nibbles.

Volunteers help run the bingo. If you are interested in helping, call Maggie Pugh at 791-7277.

108 UPCOMING EVENTS

- **The Lions Annual Spaghetti Dinner** at the Community Hall March 18 at 5:30
- **Lions "Walk for Guide Dogs"** May 28th

REGULAR 108 HAPPENINGS

- **Bingo** every Friday evening at the Community Hall. Doors open 5:30; Bingo starts at 7:15.
 - **RCA Executive:** 1st Wednesday each month
 - **RCA Public Meetings** watch post office kiosk or web site for notices
- "108" Crazy-Quilters**
Tuesday afternoons 1 - 1:30 upstairs at the 108 community Hall, Nominal fee. Doreen 791-7242

108-er Distribution Outlets

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If you would like to have copies for distribution at your business, call Maddi at 791-9206.

**Who's been
ploughing the lake
parking areas??**

Thanks!

SERVICE CLUBS & RECREATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- **Lions Club:** Graham Allison, 791-1977, e-mail, brochure
- **108 Mile Ranch "unofficial" Tennis Club:** Shirley Carter, 791-6220; Steve Neufeld, 791-9215.
- **108 Seniors Golf Club:** 55 years and older. 395-4518
- **Traditional Folk Dance:** Maddi Newman, 791-9206
- **Quilters:** Doreen 791-7242

Ranch Community Association Board of Directors

Meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of every month. If you have input you can pass it on to one of the board members or request to present it in person. Please note: This is a volunteer board and the phone numbers are for matters pertaining to the RCA board only. Send general enquiries by e-mail (rca@jnweb.com).

RCA DIRECTORS

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