

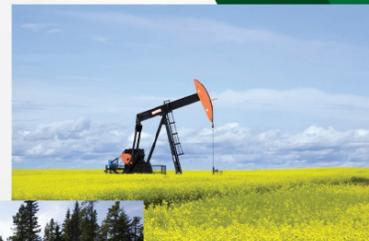
A Seismic Legacy... Public Land Management Policies in Alberta

Jason Unger, Environmental Law Centre

Thursday, April 24
Kerry Wood Nature Centre
Red Deer
7:00pm

From the setting of the first seismic charge in search of hydrocarbons to the lasting legacy of trails used (and sometimes abused) by off-road vehicles, the history of public land management has left a significant footprint on the Alberta landscape. This in turn has implications for biodiversity, particularly species at risk and general watershed health. Jason's talk will discuss the impacts of this footprint and the policy tools used to manage it. A look to future management opportunities will also be explored.

Jason Unger has focused on environmental law since being admitted to the Alberta Bar in 2002. He has been with the Environmental Law Centre (ELC) since 2005. His current areas of focus at the ELC include water law, species at risk and wildlife law, conservation tools on private lands and administrative law. He is involved on several boards and has been a long-serving director of the multi-stakeholder Alberta Water Council.



All photos by Jason Unger

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PIKAS

By Bonnie Mullin

The elusive little pika (*Ochotona princeps*) (pronounced PIE-ka) is one of my favourite critters I find in the talus slopes and boulder fields of our mountains. To find one is a cause for excitement and pulling out the camera. We often hear them when up high but seeing these critters is the challenge. We lucked out a couple years ago on the trail to Stanley Glacier in Kootenay National Park. Not only did we see the pika but we sat and watched it at work, stocking up for winter.

Info from “Handbook of the Canadian Rockies” by Ben Gadd: “Length 19cm, weight 115g. with rounded ears and no tail. The pika looks like a guinea pig but is not closely related; it is a lagomorph like rabbits and hares, nickname is rock-rabbit. Pikas have unusual feet: the soles are covered with tiny hairs, good for traction on rocks.

Their sound is a high-pitched ‘eek.’ Not till they move do you see where they are. Pikas eat grasses, sedges, lichens, and many alpine flowers and the emerging leaves of alpine willows and dwarf birch. In late summer they collect vegetation and dry it out on flat boulders, then take it down into their runs among the jumbled rocks. They also stash their hay under boulders that can be reached through snow burrows. A lot of supplies must be laid in, for winters are long in the Ca-



nadian high country and the pika does not hibernate.

Like rabbits and hares, pikas **refect**, meaning that they eat their own dung. This sounds disgusting to us primates, but only special pellets are eaten, soft and green, made of partly digested food. Normal droppings are not eaten.

Pikas live in loose colonies. Each animal has its own territory, perhaps 50m by 50m in size. Those members of the group not otherwise occupied as sentries, moving about from one vantage point to another and warning everyone of approaching enemies: golden eagles, northern harriers, weasels, wolverines and lynx. The most dangerous is the short-tailed weasel, which is able to enter pika runs.

In southern Alberta pikas produce about 3-5 babies in May. Often another batch arrives in July, but few of the second litter survive. The young are precocious, born furry and active; they are weaned in only 12 days and are nearly grown in a couple of months, although not sexually active for at least a year. Lifespan is about 3-4 years.”

If you are in the mountains and get to see these special little creatures, consider yourself blessed.



SPRING SIGHTINGS

(as of March 25)

Species Reported so far this spring!

Canada Goose

Rough-legged Hawk

American Robin

American Tree Sparrow

Mountain Bluebird

(March 18th Calgary, March 24

North of Bleriot Ferry and on

Highway 597 by Burbank)

Saw-whet owls calling (first heard
on March 10th)

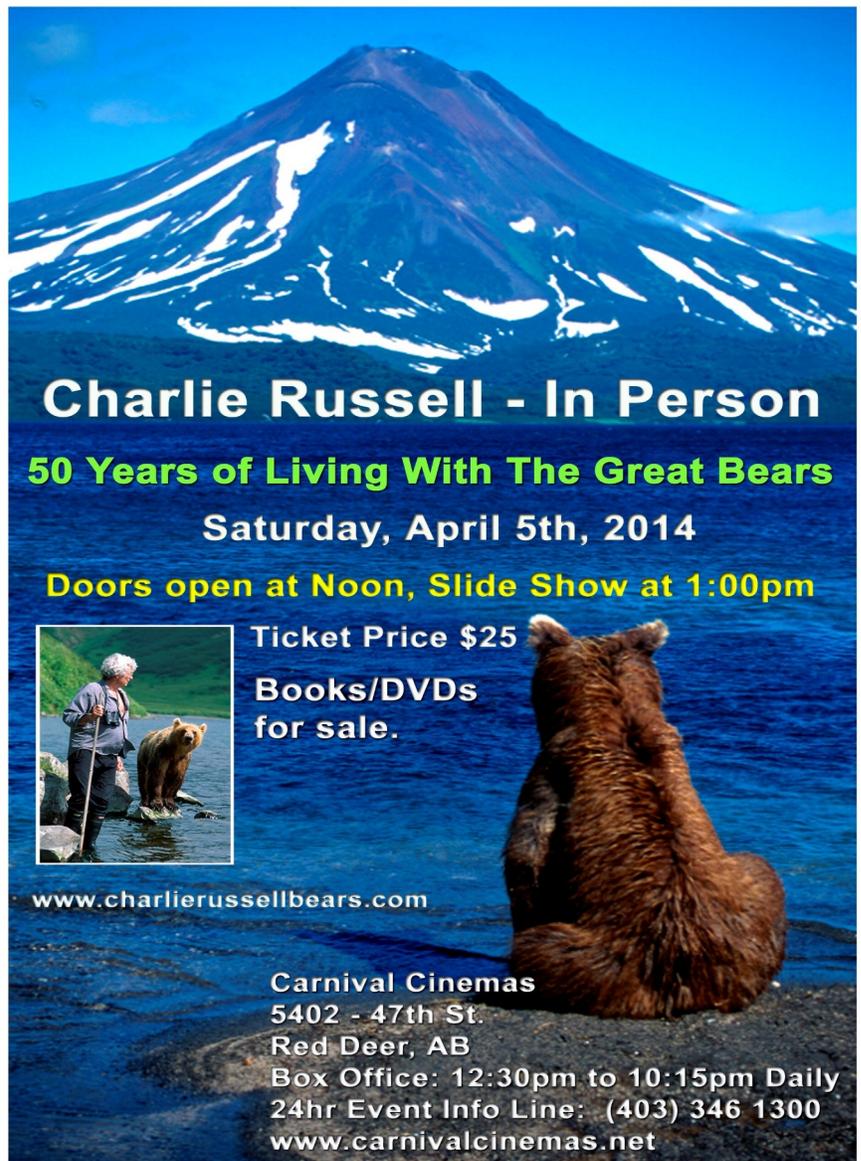
JOHN CADDY PHOTOS FROM VANCOUVER ISLAND



Red-bellied Sapsucker



Long-tailed Duck



Charlie Russell - In Person

50 Years of Living With The Great Bears

Saturday, April 5th, 2014

Doors open at Noon, Slide Show at 1:00pm

Ticket Price \$25
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24hr Event Info Line: (403) 346 1300
www.carnivalcinemas.net



Photos by Myrna Pearman



BUFFALO LAKE NATURALISTS PRESENT:

STONE NETS AND ICE WEDGES

TIM SCHOWALTER: APRIL 17TH 7:00 PM

It is generally known that the Stettler region was over-run by glaciers during the Ice Age. Less well known is that the region was not covered with glaciers during most of the Ice Age but the ground was permanently frozen for long periods. We will look at how glaciers shaped our modern terrain and some of the evidence of permafrost here as well as other bits of geologic information. Call 403-742-5191 for more information.

If you care about the (mis) treatment and (mis) management of wolves in Alberta:

www.wolfmatters.org

FLOWER FOCUS

Orchids

April 16th KWNC 10:00 AM



Photo by Don Wales

For more information contact Don Wales at 403-343-2937



Photos by John Caddy



Photo by Myrna Pearson

BIRD FOCUS

The Bird Focus group meets at KWNC at noon on Mondays from September to May (except holiday Mondays). Be prepared to carpool and bring your own snacks and beverages. Most birding is done from vehicles. Everyone is welcome. Call Judy for information 403-342-4150.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

April 7: Delburne/Lousana area

April 14: Buffalo Lake

April 21: Gull Lake

April 28: west country field trip

Our annual Sandhill Crane trip to Hwy 36/Alliance area will be on Sunday, April 27. We will leave Red Deer at 8:00 AM. Come prepared to carpool and bring food and drinks for the day. Please call Judy at 403-342-4150 to register and for further information.

May Species Count: May 24 and 25

The Red Deer River Naturalists, the first natural history organization to be established in Alberta, was incorporated as a society in 1906. The objectives of the society are to foster an increased knowledge, understanding and appreciation of natural history, and to support conservation measures dealing with our environment, wildlife and natural resources.

Annual membership is \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families. Regular meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of most months at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, 6300-45 Ave., Red Deer, AB. Everyone is welcome.

Members are encouraged to contribute to this newsletter. Deadline is the last Friday of the month.

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Front cover designed by Doug Pederson

Our thanks to NOVA for underwriting the cost of newsletter printing

