

# OUTDOOR PURSUITS



with Rob Miskosky

## Wolves in Sheep's Clothing? Part II

**I**t's tough to write about. The research is never-ending and the dots are near impossible to connect. But they are there and they do connect once you begin the research.

Let's begin with; what does Dona Ana County, New Mexico have to do with Alberta?

And, how is Dona Ana County connected to The Wildlands Project and the Canmore based group Y2Y?

Or, better yet, just who the hell is the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance?

Before we can answer those questions we have to take a look at a

movement across North America to protect public and private lands from, well, people.

Last month we talked about the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, or Y2Y as their acronym suggests. Y2Y, in conjunction with many other environmental groups who have the same vision, born by the infamous eco-terrorist Dave Foreman, hope to create "connected" wildlife corridors and protected areas all the way from the Yucatan in southeastern Mexico through Alberta and to

the Arctic. These areas, in eventuality, would be off-limits to human activity.

We see it all the time right here in Alberta with the creation and expansion of provincial and wildland parks, most born under the pressures of these same groups who have a grand vision of human population control.



*Traditional uses of public lands are threatened by ever increasing restrictions.*

The premise is that we are moving further and further into those last remaining wild areas, creating less room for those creatures that depend on this same land. And there is some truth to that.

In Alberta gas and oil exploration is seen by many as the plague of the

province. But for an equal amount, if not more, oil and gas have given us the prosperity we have come to depend on. It's a slippery slope we tread and much needs to be done to protect what is still wild, of that there is no doubt.

But there are many different ways to protect lands without going to the extremes of a man such as Foreman who came up with the idea of tree spiking, hammering spikes into trees to stop the timber industry while endangering

the lives of loggers and sawmill workers.

And who publicly stated, "destroy civilization and technology, and eliminate the need for the word 'wilderness' because everything will be wilderness."

And a man connected to Y2Y in Canmore through The Wildlands Project.

Enter Calgarian Harvey Locke.

Locke is an Honorary Board Member of The Wildlands Project—who openly promote Dave Foreman—a Board Trustee for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and founder and "strategic advisor" for Y2Y.

Locke, a retired lawyer, suggests that Canada should set aside 50 per cent of its land mass as a protected area.

Protected from? Well, people.

Which sits well with Foreman's grand plan of Pleistocene rewilding and a "drastic reduction of the human population."

The word "wilderness" is a word used to describe an area left in its natural state. For most of us the word invokes images of wild animals in a wild and beautiful setting. Places where we can spend some time inhaling the earth's beauty.

But the reality is many environmental groups would rather see these areas set aside completely void of human activity. These environmental groups have successfully lobbied governments, both in Canada and the US, to set aside vast tracts of highly regulated public land that, in time, will again be lobbied by these same groups for even further regulation against human activity.

And this brings us back to Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

Dona Ana County is farm and ranch land and has been for many generations, its people left alone in a beautiful and unique part of the world to do what they do best. That was until the environmental extremists got involved and decided the lands in Dona Ana County had to be protected from the very people who live and work there.

Enter the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA), founded at the hands of the ever-reaching Dave Foreman after his exodus from The Wildlands Project.

Foreman alone is intriguing and volumes could be written about the man many believe spawned the terrorist group Earth Liberation Front (ELF). His exploits with EarthFirst! are well documented and his name shows up often in eco-terrorism discussions, including those of a past Subcommittee on Crime of the US Congress.

In an e-mail discussion with James Scarantino, an attorney and accomplished writer and a former Executive Director of the NMWA, I was told he resigned from his position because "I was not fully aware of Dave Foreman's philosophy until a bit later when I bothered to read his work."

According to Scarantino, "Underlying the

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problems with the Dona Ana County wilderness campaign is the fact that the persons ultimately calling the shots, behind the screen of a legitimate-seeming coalition and local organizers, hail from the most radical wing of the environmental movement. They include persons who founded and participated in EarthFirst!, the nation's first eco-terrorist group."

And the deeper you dig, the more you find out just how connected these groups are to each other, including Canmore's Y2Y. It becomes quite clear that these same groups have a much broader agenda, which is to remove the general public from federal and provincial lands.

While the residents of Dona Ana County continue their battle in New Mexico, here in Alberta, those who live and work in the

Willmore Wilderness continue their fight to retain the existing legislation of this pristine part of Alberta. Their battles are not so separate; in fact, they are very similar.

According to Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead, there is definitely a connection.

"Y2Y is a concern," said Campbell, who spent many years as a fishing guide in Jasper National Park. "They are a group of people who want to put their ideals on the rest of us. They are well-organized and well-funded and they pull at people's heart strings."

Campbell, who is listening to his constituents regarding the expansion of the Rock Lake Provincial Park boundary, is concerned with the direction his area is headed. Vast tracts of land previously used for hunting, fishing and trapping are suddenly

being gobbled up by expansion without public consultation, something that doesn't sit well with the feisty MLA.

"These people are preservationists. But you just can't preserve something and expect it to stay the same. Like it or not, man has to manage the land in a responsible manner. Shutting people out isn't the answer."

Bazil Leonard has been guiding and outfitting in the Willmore for nearly 40 years. His reputation is synonymous with outfitting and his knowledge of the region is second to none. He also has a deep desire to keep the Willmore with its current legislation.

"We've been aware of Y2Y for quite some time now," said Leonard in disgust. "They have no concern for the people who make their living here. They want people control, and they use the grizzly bear as a carrot on a stick to convince others they are right."

The Willmore is currently being considered for World Heritage status in a UNESCO plan to expand the existing World Heritage Rocky Mountain Parks. A plan that worries Leonard.

"We got a management plan for the BC Kakwa and started to investigate UNESCO and their World Heritage Site Program and saw nothing but red flags," said Leonard, who is the president of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation.

"In time, every site that has been given World Heritage status has seen tighter and tighter restrictions. Pretty soon it's just a pane of glass you look through and can't use.

"Since Day 1 man has left a footprint. Man is here to manage the land, not abandon it," said Leonard, clearly disturbed by the actions of the environmental activists in his backyard.

We've been watching from the sidelines for years as massive tracts of land are set aside and placed under heavy restrictions against human activity. These land masses are given names like, "wilderness and conservation areas", "wildland parks", "wildlife corridors", "wildlife sanctuaries", "heritage sites", "natural areas", "national parks" and other names. Many have merit, but just as many are the result of environmental activists who believe that human activity is the undoing of creation. That population control and the rewilding of North America are the only way to stop the scourge of the human race.

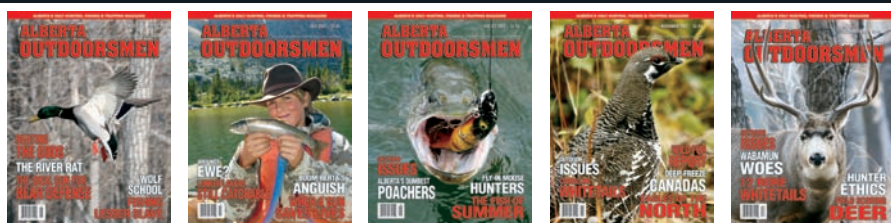
Ironically, this same vision will result in the loss of future generations to fully appreciate and admire the wonders of wild areas and wild places, to enjoy the fruits of the earth and all she has to offer.

Preserving wilderness is a grand idea, provided that preservation includes the responsible management of that same wilderness. Removing man from the scene is clearly, in the words of Bazil Leonard, "A Grand Illusion." ■

Next month, Part III

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