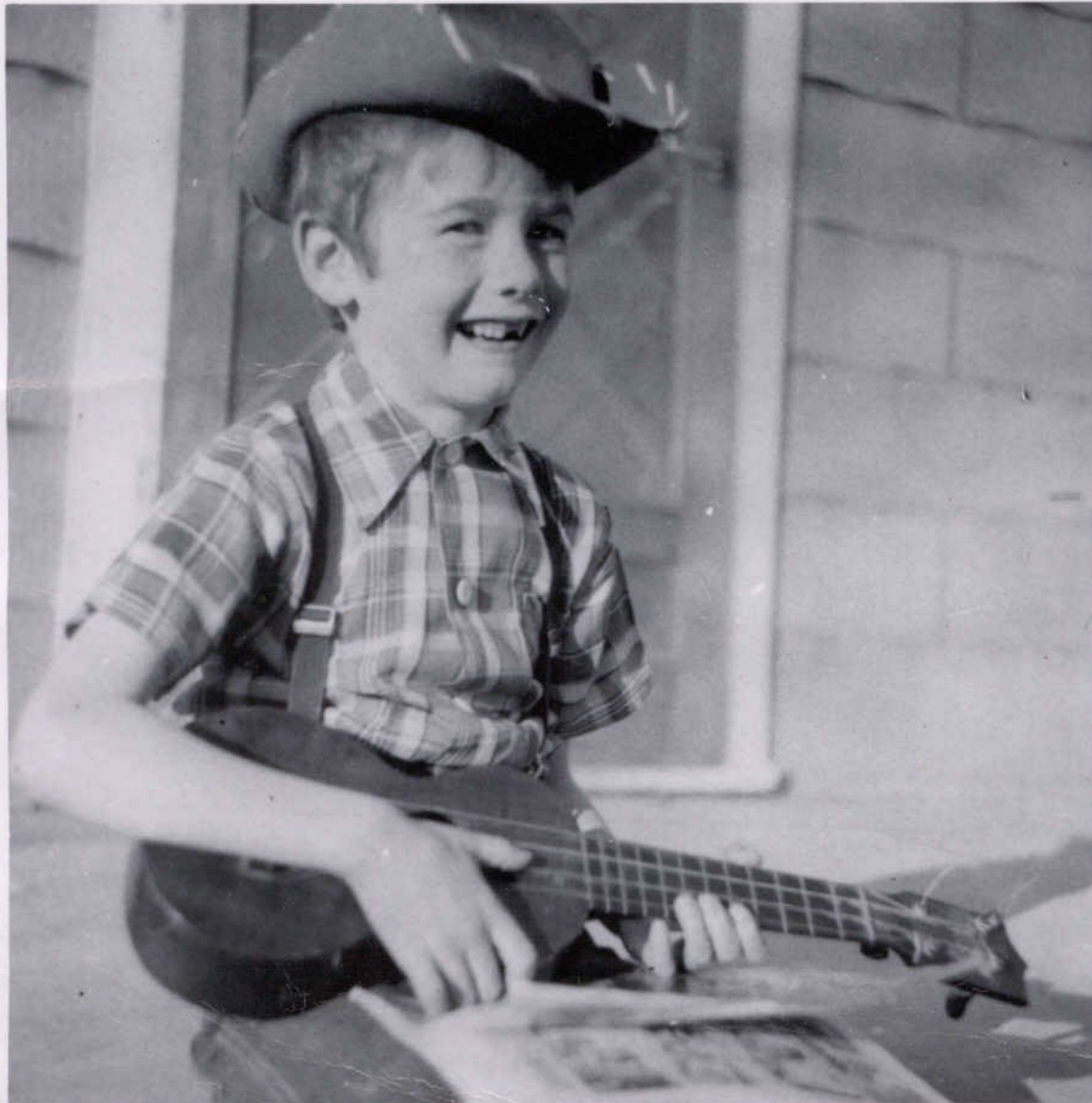


# About Ben Gadd's Career 2004 By Ben Gadd

First given as the keynote speech for an Interpretation Canada conference in Lethbridge 21 October, 2004 and presented a few times after that. For the record, my last update to the talk was 20 December, 2023.



My parents didn't know what they'd bred. I was always a ham, always a performer.

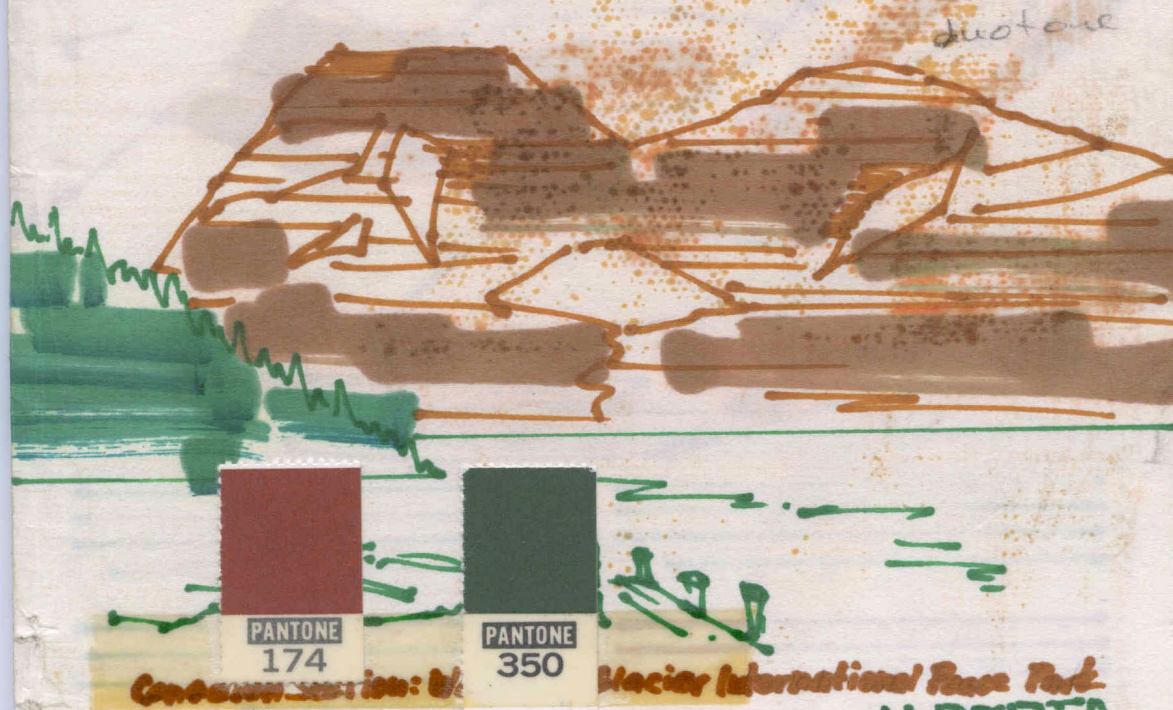
Later on I got paid for being one.  
They called me a "park interpreter."



Parks Canada

# Mountains and valleys

*A guide to the landscape of Waterton Lakes National Park*



Concession section: 0/

Glacier International Peace Park

ALBERTA

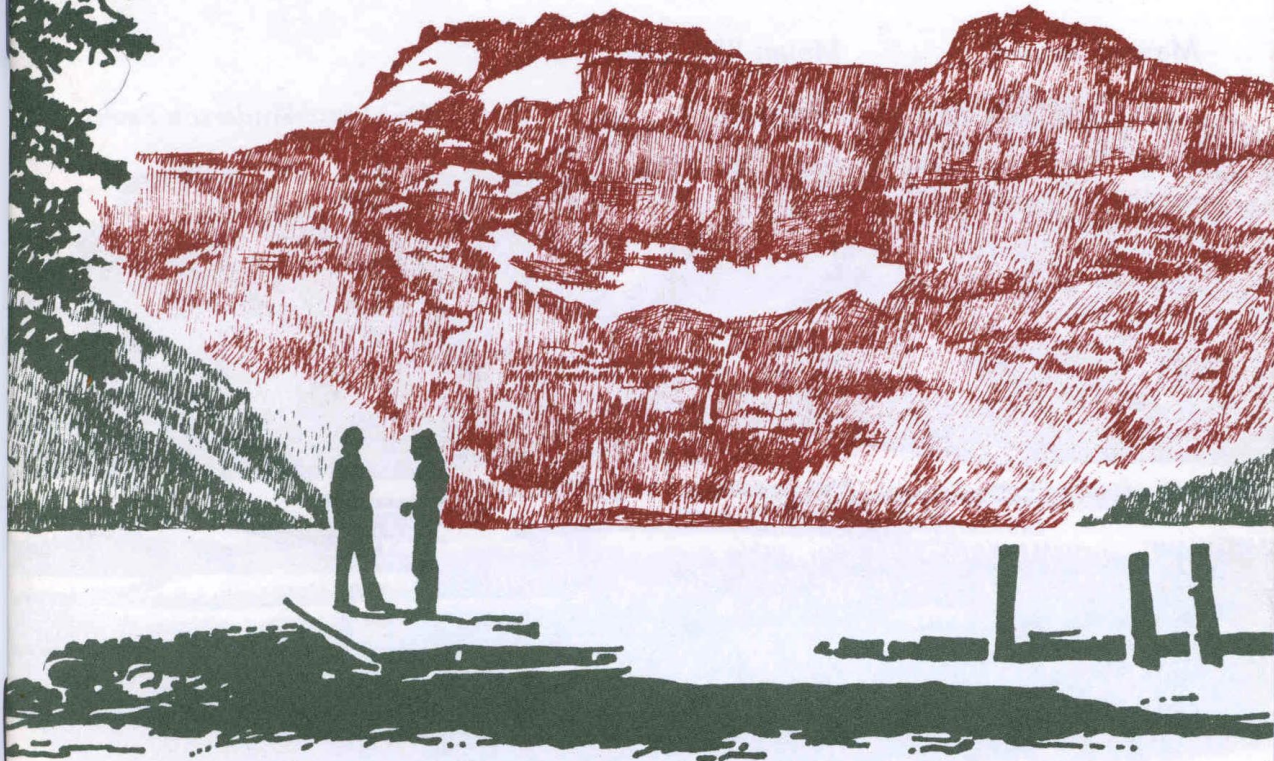
I got into this line of work by the back door, producing park literature. This was the mockup for my first interpretive brochure, 1976.



Parks Canada    Parcs Canada

# Mountains and Valleys

*A guide to the landscape of Waterton Lakes National Park*



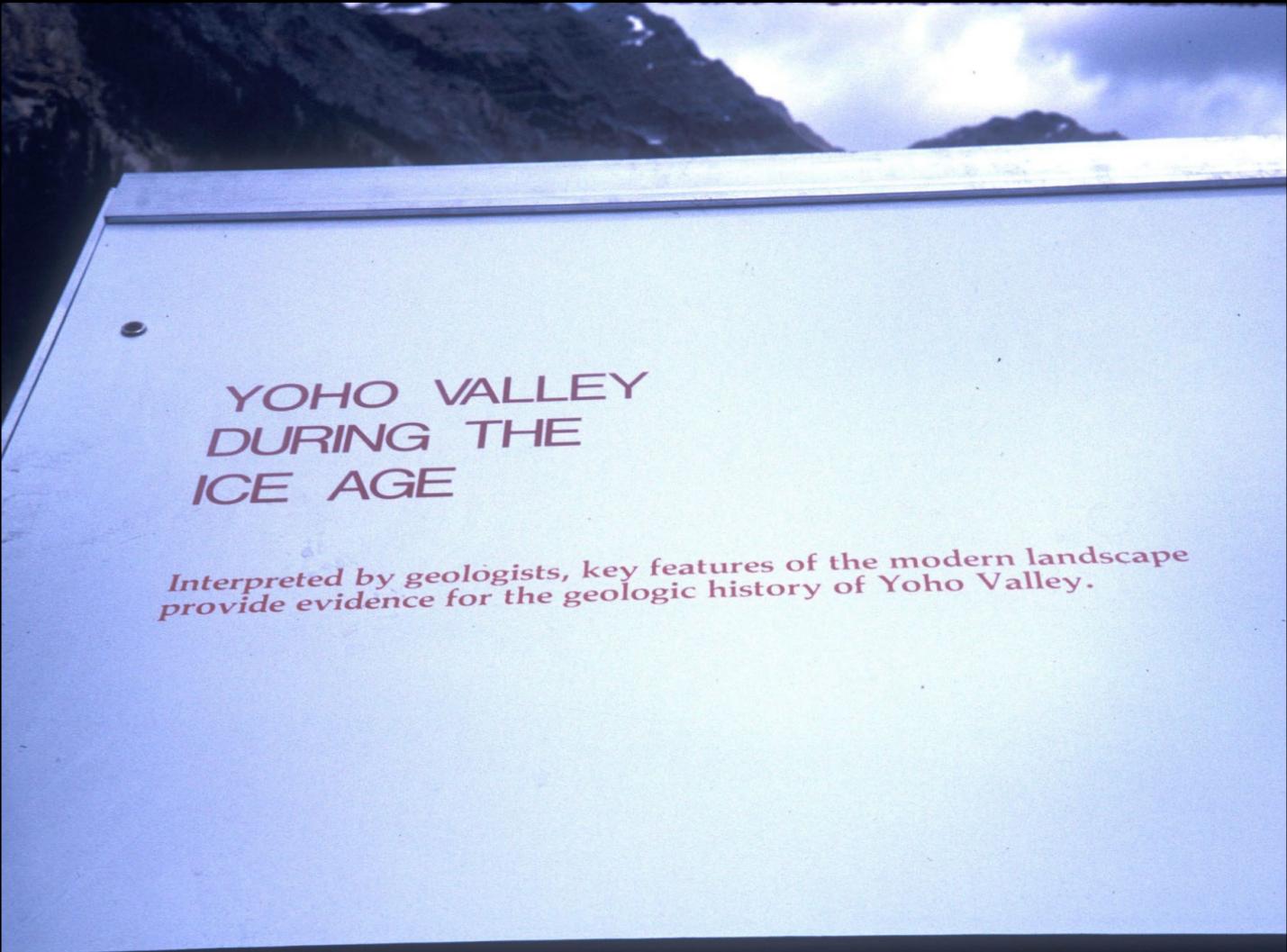
*Waterton Lakes National Park*  
*Canadian Section: Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park*

Alberta

Here's what it looked like when it was printed.



A couple of years later I was designing exhibits. This is when I learned the first and second rules of interpretive signs. The first is that it doesn't really matter what you say or how you say it. Even when it is completely wrong, people will enjoy reading the sign anyway.



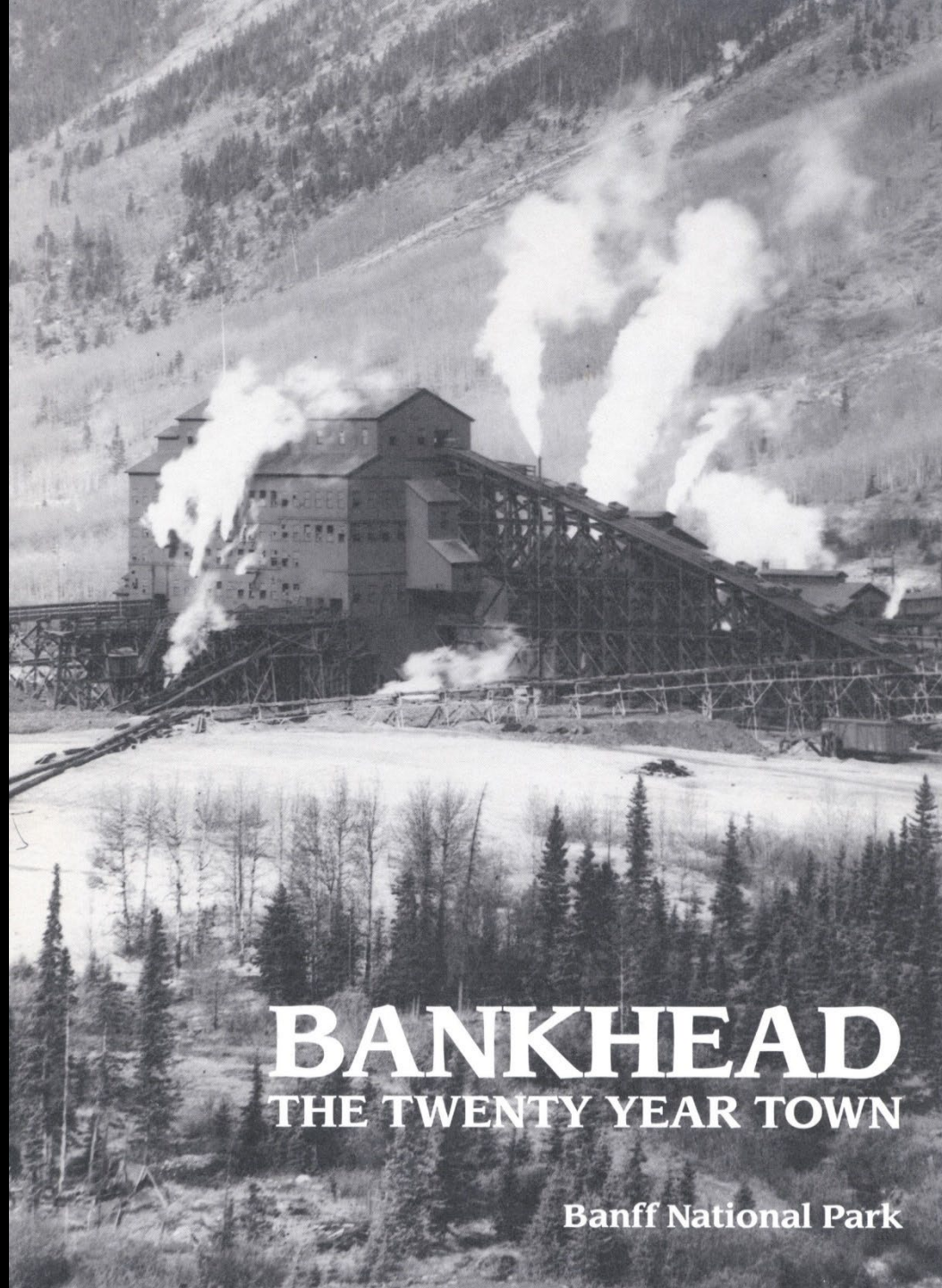
YOHO VALLEY  
DURING THE  
ICE AGE

*Interpreted by geologists, key features of the modern landscape  
provide evidence for the geologic history of Yoho Valley.*

For example, during the production of this sign the headings got transposed, such that the heading for "Yoho Valley during the ice age" was placed on the sign about the present landscape. So the sign made no sense. But never mind. The viewers stepped from one sign to the next, nodding and smiling as if nothing were wrong. I watched them! The second rule is that the more on you spend on an interpretive sign, the more obvious and embarrassing will be the error on it. In keeping with the second rule, these signs were quite expensive. Fortunately they were also badly made and fell apart in their first winter, never to be rebuilt.

In 1980 I wrote a book for Banff National Park about the now-defunct coal-mining town of Bankhead, which was founded in 1905 near Banff.

I wrote the book while my wife Cia and the kids and I were spending the winter at Hilda Creek Hostel, along the Icefields Parkway near the Banff-Jasper boundary. We left our Calgary house and dog in the care of friends.



# **BANKHEAD**

## **THE TWENTY YEAR TOWN**

**Banff National Park**

The people of Bankhead had more modern conveniences than we did. They had electric lights, and water taps were installed along the streets.

We had kerosene lamps, upgraded to propane midway through the winter, and our water had to be carried in buckets a hundred metres from the creek.

But we loved it up there. Could have stayed forever.

However, our boys were a long way from any kids their age.





We had no desire to return to the big city, so we chose Jasper and moved there in the summer of 1980.  
This was our house.



That winter I began volunteering for Parks Canada's interpretive service, in this case taking a group skiing. I did my first interpretive program. It was part of a Parks Canada series held weekly at the Lobstick Lodge hotel. I called my talk "Violence in the Rockies." Catchy, eh? Despite the clickbait title, it was not about crime in the mountains. It was about rockslides, avalanches, lightning and whatnot.

Here is the model rockslide I made for the talk.

That's my son Toby on the left and his friend Doug Milne on the right, in a photo taken for the local weekly newspaper. They had equipped the model rockslide with little model trees and animals. When one of the kids worked a lever, all the blocks came sliding down. This showed how tilted layers can collapse when undercut by glaciation, say, and the glacier melts away, leaving nothing to support the layer.



The small audience were much taken with it. Especially the kids, who rushed up to help Toby and Doug set it back up. We had to make it work over and over.





In the summer of 1981 Parks Canada hired me as a GT-1 Park Interpreter. Here's the interpretive staff during a training session. Most of us were new. I'm seated in the middle of the front row. We received three weeks of pretty intensive training. They told us how to run slide projectors, how to put interp programs together and how to lead guided walks safely. Then they let us loose on the public.

I loved it. Knew my topics well and did a good job. The visitors seemed to like me, too.





Learned another rule of park interpretation. You can tell when you've given a good talk or led a good guided walk because the participants will linger afterward, asking you things and telling you their own stories.

Jasper National Park was renowned for having one of the better interpretive shops in the system. It was because of this guy, Tony Pierce, the chief park naturalist. He had already been a park superintendent, but for his last five years before retirement he wanted to do this particular job. And he was great at it. He retired in 1982. Tony was fun to work for, encouraging, knowledgeable, willing to try new stuff. Such as joining some of the other interps for a no-boat float down the Athabasca River in a wetsuit.





Tony had several hundred of these embroidered badges made up at his own expense. We were invited to sew them onto our uniform shirts and jackets. Tony's idea was that they made us approachable. Otherwise we looked a lot like park wardens. And who, he reasoned, wanted to go up to a cop and ask a question about bird nests? What he didn't know is that in Europe, "naturaliste" is sometimes confused with "naturaliste," which means "nudist." Visitors from France would sometimes laugh and ask us when we were going to take off our clothes.





In the winter the park found the money to keep most of us employed at least part-time. We worked on various projects, as well as doing interp programs at the hotels and leading winter guided walks.



Interpretation Canada was large and strong in those days. Here's what we looked like in 1982. I'll bet some of you recognize a lot of those faces, or maybe you're even in the picture.

When not on the job I was doing  
adventurous things in the Rockies, such  
as mountaineering on Mount Robson...



Rock-climbing on Castle Mountain...





Exploring caves...

And climbing frozen waterfalls.  
So I was quite comfortable in rough terrain.  
I led many a guided walk to places that park  
visitors would not otherwise have gone.



Such as this one, Morro Canyon in eastern JNP. It was a dry limestone gorge. The group carried an extension ladder, and we used it to get everyone up the short waterfalls and into truly awesome surroundings. They found the trip exhilarating, a great experience.



It all made me very happy. I figured I'd found my life's work. I'd be a seasonal naturalist until retirement. I had no interest in climbing the civil-service ladder and getting stuck behind a desk. Never mind the low pay. The job would be there every spring, summer and fall. In the winter I could expect part-time work with the park, and I could also make money writing, editing and doing graphics.



Each summer, in addition to our park-interpreter duties we were asked to carry out some sort of project of value to the park.

In the winter of 1981-1982, a couple of friends of mine and I skied up the Snaring River in the park, something that had probably never been done before, and we spotted what looked to be cave openings on the big limestone cliffs there.

So for my project the following summer I organized a helicopter trip to the area. We found a number of caves, none of which had ever been entered by a human being. This is one of them. We named it Cliffside Cave. The only way in was to rappel 40 metres down a much higher cliff.



Here's my son Will, now a world-renowned climber, getting ready to descend a 60-m vertical shaft on that same trip. He was fifteen. One of the caves we discovered, the Ice Trap, has since turned out to be quite long, with the largest rooms known from any cave in the Canadian Rockies. The whole area now goes by the name I gave it. "Snaring Karst." In geologese, "karst" means a landscape with subterranean drainage. Which this place definitely was! So my job was rewarding, both for the park and for me.



As long as we interps showed up at our events on time, and we didn't say things that embarrassed the park superintendent, and we got the park visitors back unharmed, we could do pretty much as we pleased.



And we always had fun.

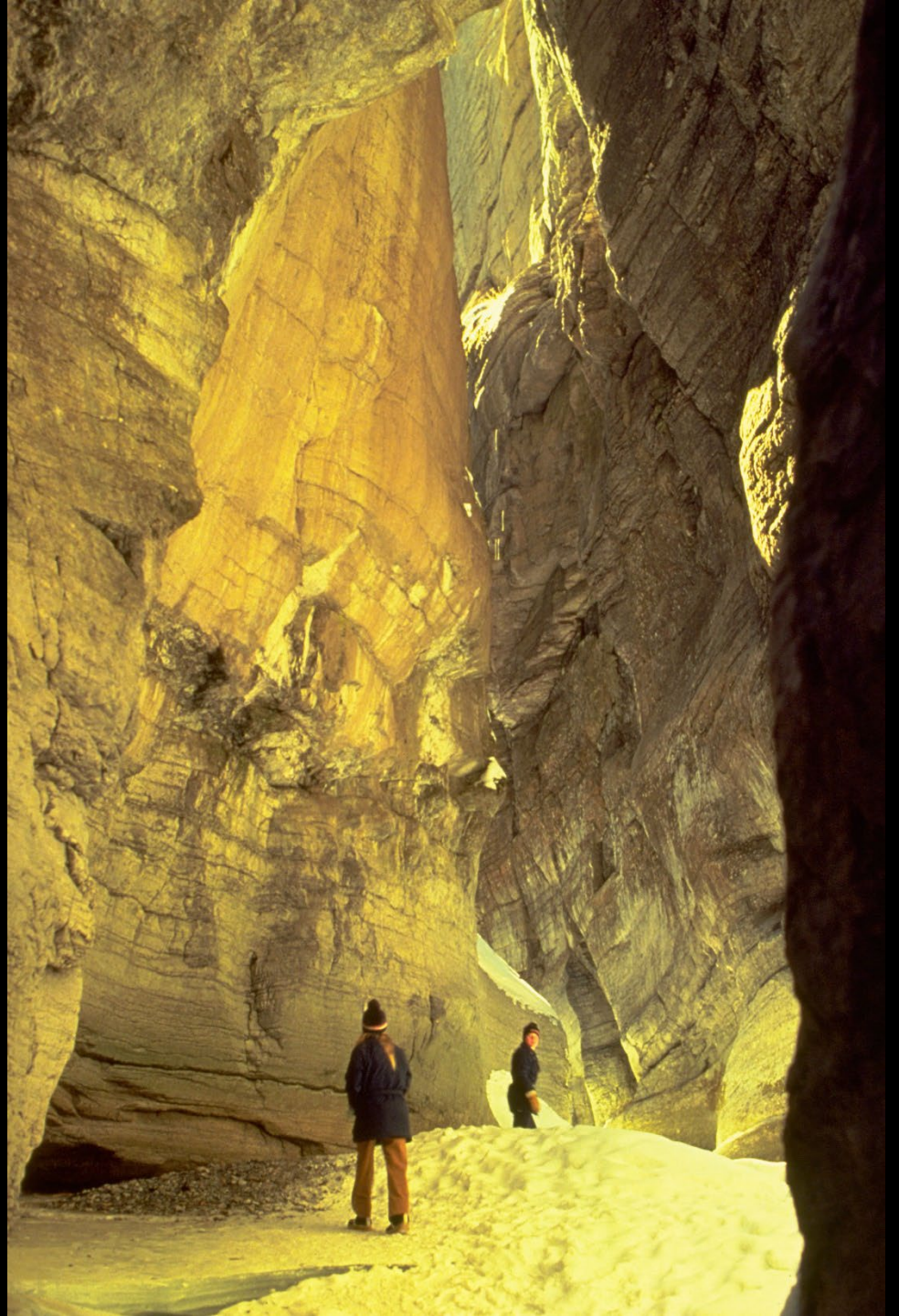


For something completely different ...  
join "SNOTS" (Some Naturalists  
Observing the Solstice)! June 21-22

Meet here Sunday evening, 9 p.m. for a  
van-ride up Signal Mtn. Bring sleeping  
bag, observational aids (binoculars, No-Doz,  
intoxicants, etc.). Returning Monday morn.

MORE INFO: TALK TO BEN, "SNOTS" CHAIRMAN  
FOR 1981

My favorite place to take park visitors was Maligne Canyon, and my favorite time to do so was in winter, when the water stopped running through it. You could walk along the bottom of the gorge. These guided trips were pioneered by Tony Pierce. He named them “canyon crawls,” because they were held on Sunday morning as follow-up to the Saturday-night pub-crawls that skiers would indulge themselves in.



I knew and loved Maligne Canyon, which is so interesting geologically. People on my canyon tours were quick to pick up on that enthusiasm.



In some years the canyon floor would freeze, then any water remaining under the ice would drain away. We could let ourselves down through a hole I had cut in the ice...





And then walk underneath it. In this case “canyon crawl” was exactly the right phrase.  
As far as I know, the Maligne canyon crawls were unique in the world.

## Some heretical thoughts about uniforms

Ben Gadd, Seasonal Naturalist, Jasper National Park

It's about those uniforms we interpreters wear. I've been doing some thinking.

I think that it's strange to look like a bus driver while talking to a family about bird nests.

What's your feeling? Is it strange to look like a bus driver while talking about bird nests? Is it **necessary**?

I submit that it isn't. In fact, I do better with people when I'm dressed like me rather than like some interchangeable Parks-Canada part. The essence of good interpretation is rapport, and I find that rapport easier to get when I don't look like a policeman. Or a postman, or a chauffeur.

Alas, this happy situation did not last. In 1983 I got into a row with Parks Canada about uniforms.

I have never liked wearing a uniform. That's partly because I have always been anti-military, but mainly because a uniform makes you kind of the property of whoever you're working for. Tony Pierce had not been all that keen on uniforms either. He had asked us to wear our official shirts on our guided walks, and whatever pants we wished to wear, as long as they were clean and suitable. And our nametags, showing that we were indeed Parks Canada employees. We hadn't much cause to complain. On the other hand, the female park interpreters liked their uniforms. One of them told me that park visitors gave her more respect, i.e. on guided walks the guys in the group were less likely to make sexist remarks and put their hands on her. After Tony retired, the new boss of JNP's interpretive shop was Jim Todgham. He was far more authoritarian. He demanded that everyone wear the uniform, pants included, whenever we were on the job, whether we were out with the public or not. Perhaps you have been reading that item on the screen, which was the beginning of an article I wrote about uniforms for the Interpretation Canada newsletter. My boss was unmoved by it. Neither was the park superintendent, George Balding, who hardly ever wore his uniform but ordered me to wear mine. When I pointed this out to him, he was not amused. I went to the union about the issue and filed a grievance. My working conditions had changed for the worse, and I had not been consulted.



Environment  
Canada

Environnement  
Canada

520, 220 - 4th Avenue, S.E.  
P. O. Box 2989, Station M,  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3H8

January 6, 1984

REGISTERED MAIL

Your file    Votre référence

Our file    Notre référence

CAL-1983-75

Mr. Benevil Gadd  
P. O. Box 245  
Jasper, Alberta  
T0E 1E0

Dear Mr. Gadd:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your grievance at the second level.

I have discussed your grievance with Anne Peterson, National Component, PSAC, and I am fully aware of your personal beliefs and convictions concerning the wearing of a Park Interpreter's uniform while on duty. I am also certain that you are fully aware of the Department's Policy and rationale for Park Interpreters to wear a uniform during their hours of work and that the requirement to wear a uniform is a condition of employment.

After considering all the factors relating to your grievance, I can find no reason to veto the Superintendent's decision to deny your grievance. You are again advised that you will be required to wear the uniform provided by the Department during any period of employment by Parks Canada.

Steve Kun  
Director  
Parks Canada  
Western Region

cc: G. Balding, Superintendent, Jasper  
A. Peterson, PSAC, Ottawa  
D. Mullen, PSAC, Jasper  
L. Willoughby, DOE, Hull

Canada

In order to conserve energy  
and resources, this paper  
contains post-consumer  
fibre.

À des fins de conservation  
de l'énergie et des ressources  
ce papier contient des  
fibres recyclées.

It came to nothing. Here is the letter I received from Steve Kun, Park's Canada's western regional director. He directed me to wear the uniform. Things got worse. In the summer of 1984 we JNP interps found ourselves burdened by new rules and more paperwork. But wait, there was more. We got new uniforms, which were badly designed for the work we needed to do. The shirts and pants could have been designed by mosquitoes. Also, we were supplied with too few shirts and pants, such that we had to wash one set practically every day. I was getting really annoyed. But rather than quit, in the summer of 1984 I hung on, taking leave for ten days to work on a project of my own.

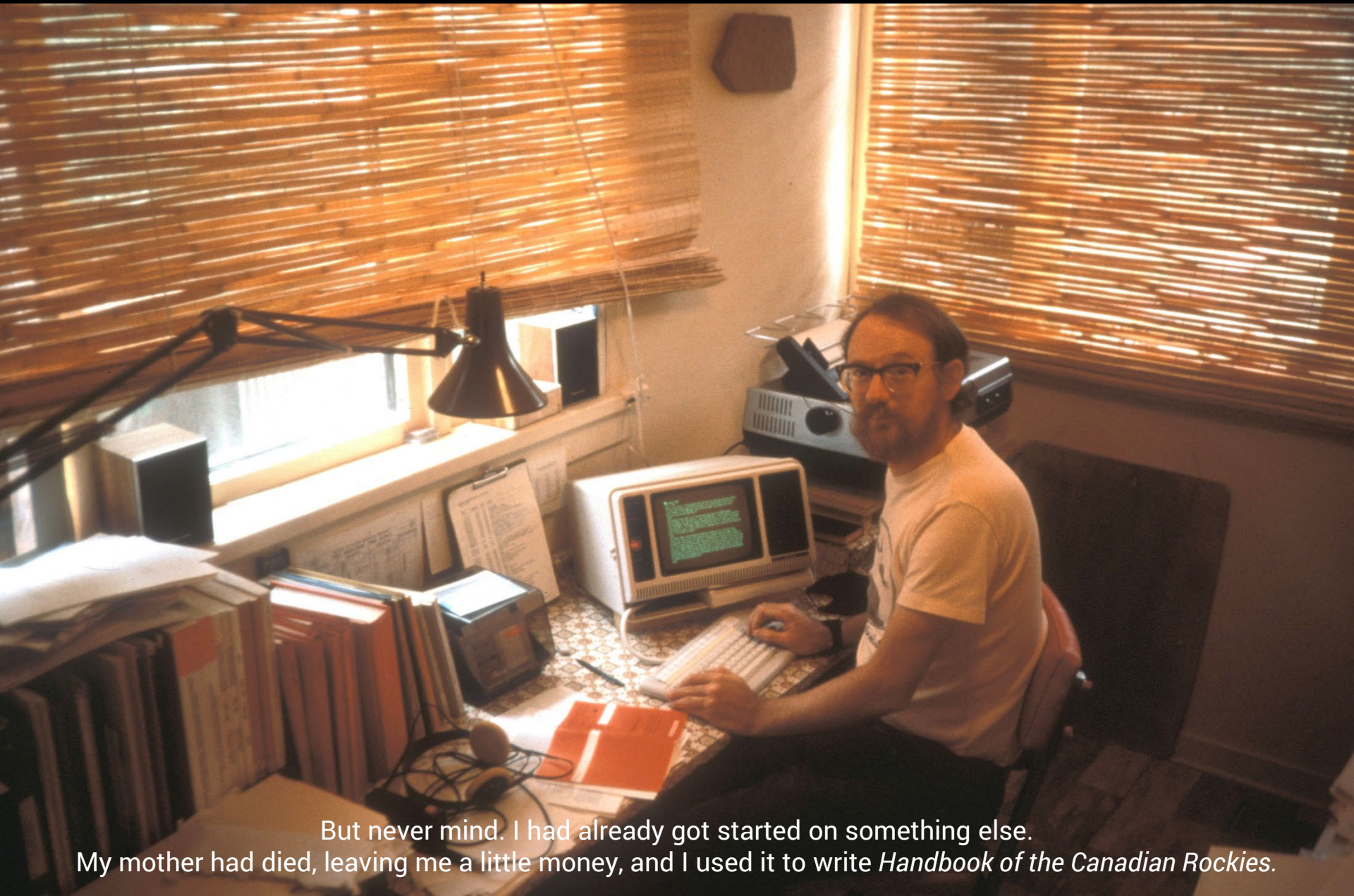


**Brian Mulroney**  
Canadian Prime Minister 1984-1993

Then, in September, this guy came to power. Almost immediately, the annual budget for Parks Canada was cut. A new minister of environment made it her task to squeeze out the upper echelon and install bean-counters who began to run the agency like a corporation. I knew I wouldn't last much longer.

That winter there was no part-time work for us seasonal naturalists. We usually started work in April, but in 1985 the season was shortened and we didn't start until mid-May. Jim Todgham called me into his office to give me my summer assignment. I was to go to the West Edmonton Mall and wear this costume. It was Boomer the Beaver, the new park mascot in his warden hat. I would walk the halls as Boomer, handing out park literature. Ten days on, four days off. Of which two would be used driving to and from the city. I quit, of course. Which is what Jim was hoping I would do. That was the end of my short-lived career with Parks Canada. My dream of working mostly outdoors with the public summer after summer had been dashed. For now.





But never mind. I had already got started on something else.  
My mother had died, leaving me a little money, and I used it to write *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*.

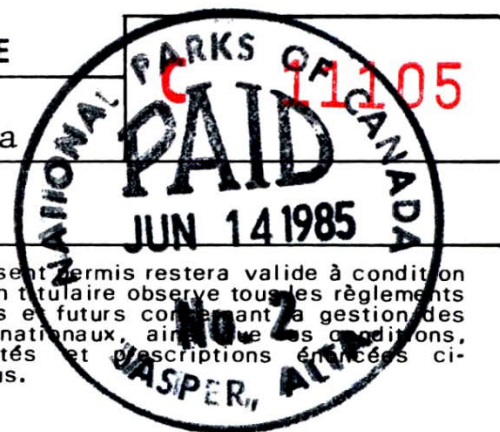


Parks Canada  
Parcs Canada

85-86

**BUSINESS LICENCE  
PERMIS D'ENTREPRISE COMMERCIALE**

Issued to – Délivré à <b>Ben Gadd, Interpretive Guide</b>		Location – Lieu <b>Box 245 Jasper, Alberta</b>	
On the premises known as – Local <b>Block 13, Lot 13 &amp; 14</b>			
Type of business – Genre d'entreprise <b>Interpretive Guide</b>		<div><p>This licence is subject to the observance by the licensee of all the regulations for the control and management of national parks now or hereafter in force and to the following terms, conditions and stipulations:</p><p>Sec. 57 - 45.00 35A - 15.00</p><p><u>STIPULATION</u></p><p>To provide interpretive events throughout the park but not involving guiding services as set out in categories 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 &amp; 7 of Schedule I to the National Parks Businesses Regulations.</p></div> <div><p>Le présent permis restera valide à condition que son titulaire observe tous les règlements actuels et futurs concernant la gestion des parcs nationaux, ainsi que les conditions, modalités et descriptions énoncées ci-dessous.</p><p><i>[Signature]</i> <b>D.M. Wellock</b> 1 Park superintendent – Surintendant de parc A/Superintendent</p></div>	
In – Situé dans <b>Jasper National Park</b>			
Date of issue – Date d'émission <b>June 14, 1985</b>			
Expiry Date – Date d'expiration <b>March 31, 1986</b>			
Fee Droit \$ <b>60.00</b>			
PC 98 (6-75) 7530-21-023-9105			




It wasn't a lot of money, so I needed to earn some, too. Maybe I could do the sort of work I was doing as a park interpreter but for park visitors who paid me directly. Jim Todgham was all in favor. In June I applied for a national-park business licence and got one as a private-sector park interpreter. At the time there were apparently no others in the parks. I seem to have been the first. Not that I wanted to have that distinction. But it was the only way I could carry on doing what I liked to do. And it was in line with a new federal employment policy that favored the private sector wherever possible. Gulp. I was part of Brian Mulroney's evil plan for Parks Canada.

But I did get a kick out of the “stipulation” on that business licence.

### STIPULATION

To provide interpretive events throughout the park but not involving guiding services as set out in categories 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7 of Schedule I to the National Parks Businesses Regulations.



D. M. H. 11-1

In other words, Doug Wellock, who was in charge of such things in JNP and a decent fellow, had not been able to find an existing category for this business licence. So he said that my occupation was like all those others, but different.

Now on my own, I tried going to the parking lot at Mount Edith Cavell and sitting there with a sign offering to guide people around the loop or up to the meadows. I didn't have many takers, and Parks Canada soon asked me to stop. They were right. This was way too commercial. In the meantime I had let the various hotels in Jasper know that I was now available to do interpretive programs and guided walks for them. Was surprised to get business right away, mostly from convention groups staying at Jasper Park Lodge.



And when winter arrived I began guiding in Maligne Canyon. For some years I had been leading the canyon crawls there for Parks Canada, but now none were being offered. Cia got her guide's license, too, and we stepped in to fill the gap.



This went well. Parks Canada let Cia and me meet our groups at the park information centre, just as we had done in previous years. Seeing an opportunity, an outfit called Maligne Tours, which had the tour-boat concession on Maligne Lake, tried to get in on this, too. Their guides, who were not well prepared, used the steps we had cut into the ice. That created a liability problem for us if one of *their* clients slipped on one of *our* steps and got hurt. This company had a reputation for playing hardball. They didn't cooperate on scheduling, sometimes bringing their groups into the canyon while we were in there with ours. But we outlasted them. They failed to make enough money and quit. Cia and I continued to guide at Maligne Canyon until we left Jasper in 2009.



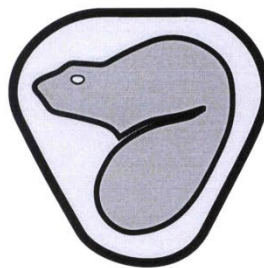
By 1986 Parks Canada was in serious trouble. The Mulroney government kept cutting the funding. Environment minister Suzanne Blais-Grenier, the Quebec politician who was de-facto the boss of the entire national-and-historical-parks system, was roundly hated by park employees and park supporters for mismanaging the agency.

Two years later she was forced out of the cabinet for overspending on her expense account, among other signs of corruption.

In 1993 Tom Lee was made the deputy minister in charge of Parks Canada. A veteran cost-cutter, his motto seemed to be, "Get the most work out of the fewest people for the least money." Under his watch, Parks Canada was reorganized. It became even more corporate. Now referred to as a "special agency," it was required to pay most of its own way.

Fees the visitors paid at the gate and for camping went up and up. Every increase in the money a park was taking in came off its budget allotment for the following year.

By 1996 I was really pissed off with this state of affairs. I wasn't alone. There were union strikes and public demonstrations. For one such I made this leaflet. In it I used the Parks Canada beaver logo to political effect.



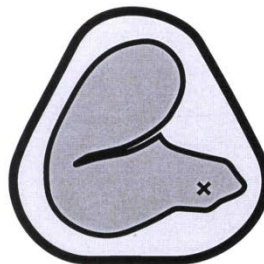
## Parks Canada, 1986

In the mid-eighties, the Canadian national parks system was renowned as the best in the world. Jasper National Park had a large and well-trained warden service, excellent campgrounds and a visitor education program second to none. Parks Canada had the funds, the staff and the authority to keep things that way. But the Mulroney government had other ideas. A massive reorganization of the parks service was in the works.



## Parks Canada, 1996

The reorganization is now a fact. Parks Canada is directed by Mulroney-era appointees who have cut the funding, laid off staff and weakened Parks Canada's ability to protect the parks from over-exploitation by private business. Park fees have increased considerably. Jasper's campgrounds are looking tatty and run-down. The education program is all but gone. Public funds are being spent on upgrading ski-area access roads and promoting the parks in Japan. The warden service is swamped with problems created by increased visitation and rampant commercial development.



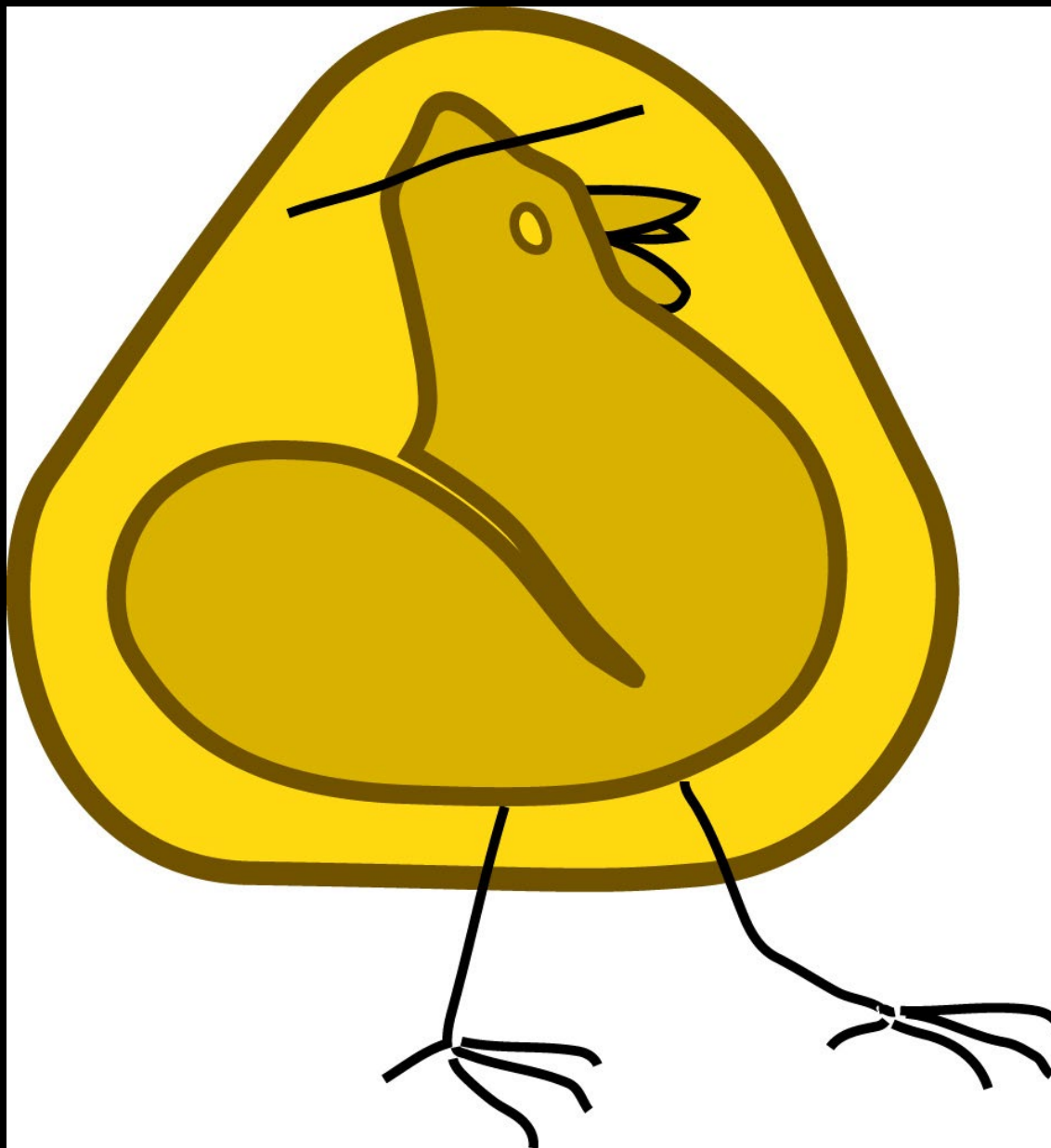
## Parks Canada, 2006?

In the next ten years you can expect to see more layoffs, privatization of most park services, dependence for operating funds on royalties from park businesses the government is supposed to be regulating, and ever-higher user fees. Foreign visitors will pour into Jasper, which will become much like Banff, while more and more Canadians are priced out of their own national parks. The wildlife, the pristine landscapes, the wilderness experience—all the great things about Jasper National Park—will have been sacrificed to the money-hungry international tourist industry.

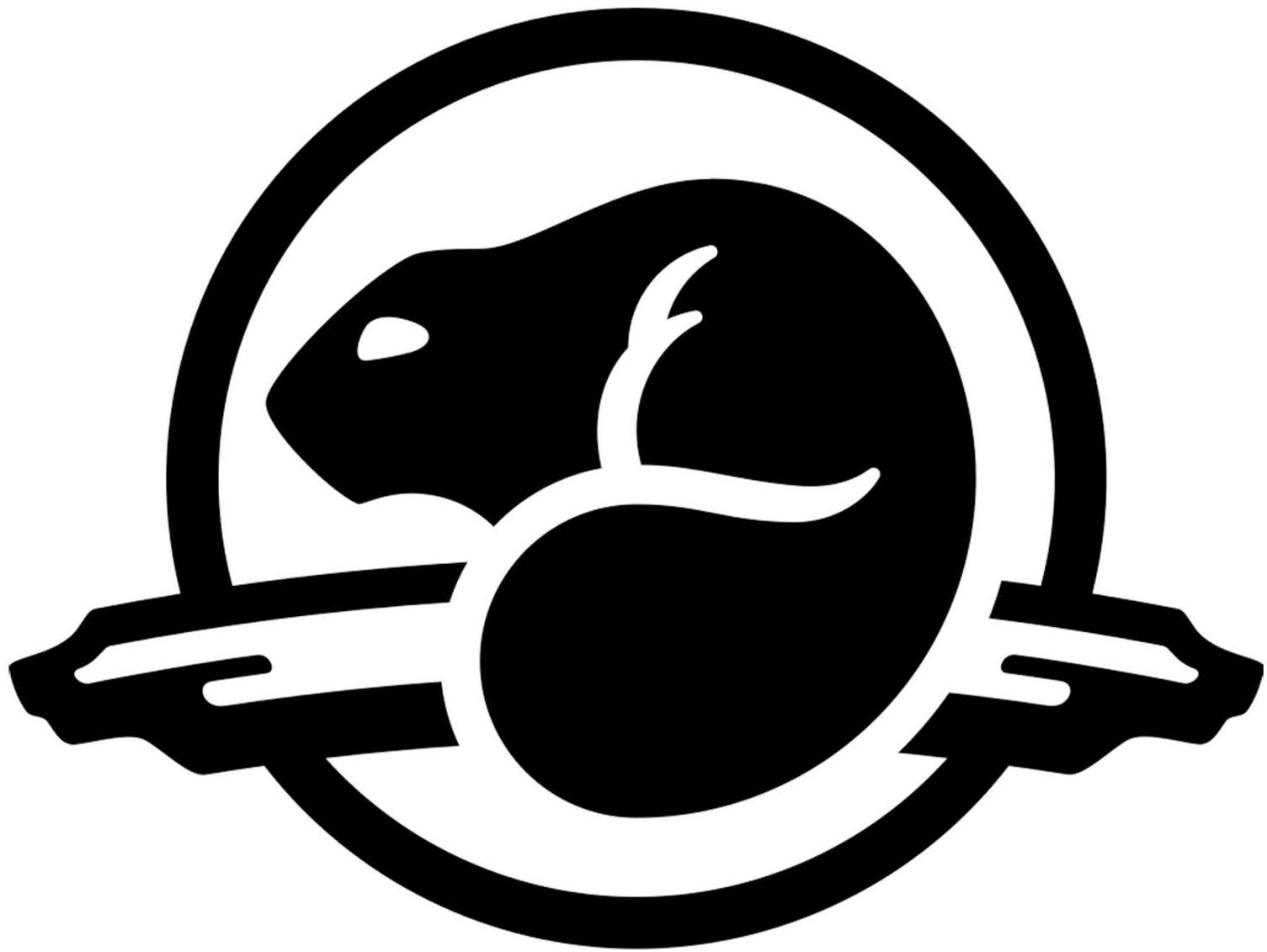
To stop the corporate takeover of Parks Canada, contact your Member of Parliament. Tell your MP that Parks Canada needs its funding restored, so the agency won't be corrupted by relying on tourist dollars. (The mountain parks already bring in far more tax revenue than Parks Canada spends on them.) Staffing levels should keep up with growth in visitation. Park services should not be privatized; this has been tried before, with poor results. *Ask your MP to rescue the national parks—before it's too late.*



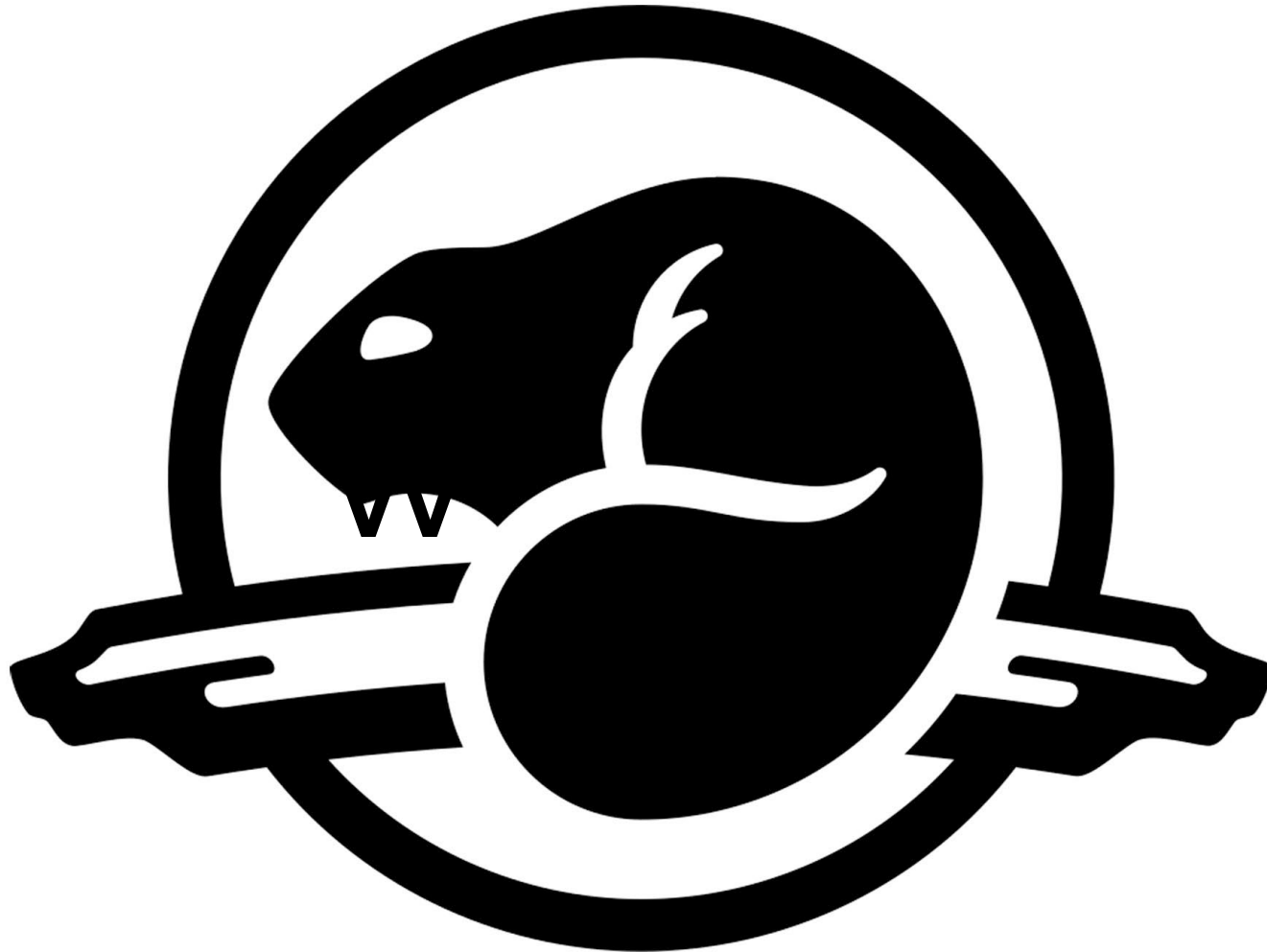
Alberta Wilderness Association, Box 6398, Station D, Calgary T2P 2E1 403-283-2025



Someone else turned the Parks Canada beaver into the Parks Canada chicken. It was effective satire. Soon after it appeared, the agency changed its logo...



To this. Much harder to turn into a chicken.



And no fun at all.

But there was a way to fix all this, which was to get Parks Canada out from under the control of the federal cabinet and thus protected from political interference. I have proposed a new version of the original National Parks Commission that I think would do the job. More information on my website, [bengadd.com](http://bengadd.com).

Politics aside, I was happy to be an independent interpretive guide.  
Here I am with a group along the trail up Sulphur Skyline in eastern JNP.



I was doing interpretation the way I wanted to, saying what I pleased and taking people wherever I liked in the park, as long as it didn't require rope.



# Summer Trails

## Jasper National Park of Canada

For free distribution  
Également offert en français



### Across the river

These trail routes lie on the east side of the Athabasca River, across from town. Reach them by going east on Highway 16 for 1.9 km to the Moberly Bridge, or south on Highway 93A for 1.6 km. Then turn left to cross the river on the Old Fort Point bridge.

#### Old Fort Point Loop

**Trailhead:** From town or from Highway 16, follow Highway 93A to the Old Fort Point/Lac Beauvert access road. Turn left, cross the Athabasca River on the iron bridge, then park in the lot on the right. Distance to the trailhead from town: 1.6 km.

Old Fort Point is a prominent bedrock hill standing 130 m above the river. Rounded on its south side, cliffy on its north side, Old Fort Point is a classic rock outcrop, a bedrock knob shaped by glaciers. The loop trail over the top is steep in places, but it provides an excellent view of Jasper and its surroundings.

The name "Old Fort" probably refers to Henry House, a North West Company cabin built near here in 1811, now gone but commemorated as a National Historic Site.

The quickest route to the big view at the top of the hill is up the stairs that start by the cliff. (The stairs lead to a Canadian Heritage Rivers plaque about the Athabasca.) But it's a steep climb. Instead, we recommend the wide, easy path that begins behind the trail information kiosk. Follow Trail 1 up a short hill and on through the woods.

At 1.3 km you climb a very steep section—30 m of elevation gain in a short distance—before an outcrop of the oldest rock in Jasper National Park. The layer is Precambrian, about 750 million years old. Take a close look at this unusual rock. It's *breccia*, made of angular chunks of pink limestone.

Here's what you can see from the top of Old Fort Point on a good day: viewing clockwise: Mt. Edith Cavell (always snow-streaked) to the south, The Whistlers (mountain with the tramway terminal near the top) to the southwest, the valley of the Miette River leading west toward Yellowhead Pass and B.C., the town of Jasper across the Athabasca River, the reddish quartzite on the Victoria Cross Range to the northwest beyond town (the peak with a microwave relay station on top is Pyramid Mountain), Lac Beauvert and Jasper Park Lodge to the north (other lakes visible are Annette, Annette and Edith), the grey limestone of the Colin Range to the northeast, rounded Signal Mountain and the cliffs of Mt. Tekarra (climbing Jasper's southeast, Mt. Hardy, sloping Jasper's south and Mt. Kerkeslin (layers bowed gently down).

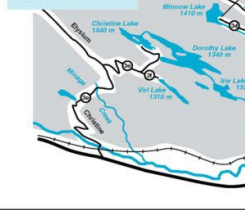
### Hike, bike and ride in a great national park

Elk, bison, bighorn sheep, moose, mountain goats and caribou must have established their own pathways in Jasper National Park long before humans arrived in the Canadian Rockies about 11,000 years ago. Aboriginal peoples discovered and used these wooded-animal trails. In the 1800s, non-native explorers, fur-company employees, railway surveyors and settlers followed.

The park was founded in 1907. Since then, its natural trail network has been expanded and maintained for the benefit of everyone wanting to experience Jasper's wildlands. Whether you're strolling the short Mary Schaffer Loop, hiking all day in the Bad Hills, mountain-biking the Wabasso Trail or riding a horse near Pyramid Lake, there is something in this guide for you.

A few of Jasper's trails are restricted to pedestrians, but much of the network is shared by hikers, mountaineers, equestrians and wildlife. We'd like to keep it that way. You can help by following the rules of courtesy and wildlife protection found in the colored boxes in this guide.

**Note:** distances given in the trail descriptions are approximate to a destination and back, around a loop, or from one parking area to another. Except as noted, times given are total on-trail times for hikers.



#### Jasper Park Lodge to Maligne Canyon

**Trailhead:** Visitor parking at Jasper Park Lodge. This is a long route, mainly in the woods, with a fair bit of uphill. It's used mostly by cyclists. From the northwest corner of the parking lot, follow yellow "7c" markers to the junction with Trail 7. Three kilometres of easy walking or cycling through a mixed forest of lodgepole pine, spruce and old-growth Douglas-fir brings you to a marsh near a junction with the Lake Edith gated road. Stay on Trail 7 as it swings right and begins the climb to the upper parking lot at Maligne Canyon.

From Maligne Canyon, cyclists can use Trail 7b to bypass the hiker-only section of Trail 7. Horses should take Trail 7c. Both can rejoin 7 and follow it to Sixth Bridge. The route loops back to Jasper Park Lodge along the Athabasca River. Total loop distance: 16 km.

#### Maligne Canyon

**Trailhead:** Fifth Bridge, 8 km east of Jasper via Highway 16. The Maligne Canyon section of Trail 7 provides the best views of Jasper's famous limestone gorges. Cross the suspension bridge over the Maligne River and keep right at all intersections as you work your way up the canyon, gaining 100 m. (You can start at the top and walk down the canyon trail, but the views are better if you're facing up-canyon.) Water gushes from springs along the way; interpretive signs explain how Maligne Canyon is connected to Medicine Lake, 15 km away, by a cave system.

Keep right at Second Bridge, leaving Trail 7 to follow the short non-interpretive interpretive path past the spectacular waterfall at the head of the canyon to the spectacular parking lot.

#### Looking for a paved path?

##### Lake Annette Loop

**Trailhead:** take Highway 16 east for 2.9 km and turn right onto the Maligne Road. Angle right onto Lodge Road, then turn left at the sign for Lake Annette. Keep right at major intersections to reach the western parking lot for the Lake Annette picnic area. The trail begins on the right side of the lot.

This short loop trail is paved and mostly level, designed especially for wheelchair use. Bicycles are not allowed on the paved road, but the trail is accessible to two locations, and there's a shelter halfway round the loop. Signs placed at wheelchair height explain the scenery.

### Close to Jasper

The trail routes described below are on the Pyramid Bench, a lake-dotted terrace adjacent to Jasper.

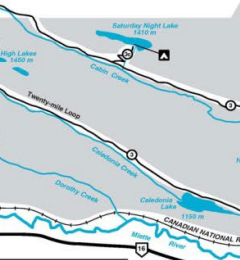
**If you have no transportation, please note that these trails are easily reached on foot from town.**

#### Cottonwood Creek and Pyramid Lake loops

**Trails 2 and 2a, 3.8 km return (1-2 hours) or 2 and 2b, 17.4 km return (3-4 hours)**

**Trailhead:** Jasper Activity Centre parking lot (in town, near start of Pyramid Lake Road), Cottonwood Slough parking lot (2 km up Pyramid Lake Road), Pyramid Stables (3.5 km) or Pyramid Lake (end of road). From town, Trail 2 begins with a steady climb of 60 m onto the Pyramid Bench, with a good view of the town along the way. Crossing the gated road to Cabin Lake, Trail 2 continues to the Cottonwood Slough parking lot and crosses the Pyramid Lake Road. Shortly past Cottonwood Creek, you reach a junction with Trail 2a. Turning right onto 2a takes you back to the north end of town along the creek, for a short walk of 1-2 hours.

To continue to Pyramid Lake, follow Trail 2 past the junction with Trail 6a and angle right onto Trail 2b. Soon the path climbs across an open hillside, giving you the first of many fine views of the Athabasca Valley.



### South of town

To reach these trails, take Highway 93 (the Icefields Parkway) south toward Lake Louise.

#### Valley of the Five Lakes

**Trails 9a and 9b, 4.2 km return (2-3 hours)**

The five small lakes are the highlights of this outing, which is a popular family hike. Trail 9a begins with an easy walk through a forest of lodgepole pine, reaching a boardwalk across the Wabasso Creek wetlands in the first kilometre. Watch for beavers. Beyond, the trail climbs across a flowery meadow to a junction. Continue on Trail 9a to reach Fifth Lake, with its small island and nesting loons. Watch for 9a markers leading left toward Fourth Lake. Third and Second, each a different depth and thus a different hue of blue-green. Between Second and First lakes turn left onto Trail 9b and follow it to close the loop. Or keep going north to Old Fort Point, 10 km farther via trails 9a, 9 and 1, mostly in the woods. **Note:** Trail 9 is heavily used by cyclists.

#### Wabasso Lake or Wabasso - Five Lakes

**Trail 9, 6.2 km (half-day) or 11 km (full-day)**

**Trailhead:** 14.6 km south on Highway 93. This trail crosses several low ridges, with a fine view from the last ridge across the Athabasca Valley to Mt. Edith Cavell and the reddish quartzite peaks north of it. Wabasso Lake was created by beavers. You can see their high, dam at the northeast corner of the lake.

For a longer walk, follow Trail 9 around the lakeshore and 6 km north along grassy Wabasso Creek to reach Fifth Lake (Five Lakes). It's less than a kilometre back to the highway from here.

**Cyclists:** a local favorite ride is to do Trail 9 in its entirety, from Wabasso Lake to Old Fort Point, 21 km.

### West and southwest

West of Jasper, the Miette River borders a continuation of the Pyramid Bench, with more lakes.

#### Caledonia Lake and the Twenty-mile Loop

**Trails 4 and 4a, 2.4 km return (1-2 hours) or 24.6 km total (7-9 hours)**

**Trailhead:** along Cabin Creek Road near the west end of Jasper, where the road turns right and branches to the right. The trailhead kiosk is a short way up, by the gate.

Trail 2b follows the edge of the Pyramid Bench for 2 km. You may see bighorn sheep grazing on the grassy slopes below you. The forest is mostly old-growth Douglas-fir, an evergreen easily identified by its furrowed bark.

After the junction with Trail 2b, Trail 2b begins a steady climb of 120 m along a wooded ridge with

#### Map 1 Trails near Jasper



openings that offer exceptional views. This scenic section is known as the "Pyramid Overlook." The trail descends to the Pyramid Lake parking lot, where it rejoins Trail 2.

For the return leg of the loop, follow Trail 2 beside the Pyramid Lake Road. The path goes behind a meadow and through the woods for 1.5 km to the complicated

stables area, where you need to follow the markers carefully. Cross the large parking lot there and find the continuation of Trail 2 to the far corner. Half a kilometre later you'll close the loop, 2.5 km from where you started.

**Note:** the loop section of this hike is heavily used by horses, especially near the stables.

#### Patricia Lake Circle

**Trails 6 and 6a, 4.6 km return (2-3 hours)**

This is an easy trail with moderate hills. From the trailhead kiosk by the stables, take Trail 6c across the Pyramid Lake Road to the junction with Trail 6. Keep right, uphill through aspen groves. Pass under a powerline and descend to the shore of Patricia Lake, where you may see loons. Patricia Lake was named for Princess Patricia of Connaught, a governor-general's daughter.

Continue past the junction with Trail 6b—a shortcut, but uphill—to reach Cottonwood Creek and a fine view of Cottonwood Slough. This is a favorite spot for watching ducks and beavers. You may see a moose. From the slough, follow Trail 6 past the junction with 6a, then take 6c back to the stables parking lot.

#### Mina Lakes - Riley Lake Loop

**Trails 6 and 2, 9 km return (3-4 hours)**

**Trailhead:** Jasper Activity Centre lot, near the start of the Pyramid Lake Road. Follow Trail 8 to the left. This trailhead is easily reached on foot from town.

Rewards come early on this popular trail, which takes you to lower Mina Lake in less than 2 km. After the initial steady climb of 160 m, the trail follows the north side of the lakes (locally pronounced "MINE-uh-"

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#### Share the valley

The area where the Miette, Maligne and Athabasca rivers converge is critical habitat for elk, sheep, moose and deer, and for their predators, including wolves, cougars, grizzly bears and black bears.

Recent research suggests that human use is displacing these large predators from some portions of this three-valley confluence. The areas shaded in grey are less disturbed by people and development, and so are especially important for movement of these species. To help us restore local habitat, please travel only on the designated trails, avoiding unmarked trails, which are used mainly by wildlife. A few designated trails are also shown in grey, because they, too, are heavily used by wildlife. To protect the animals, restore habitat and avoid conflicts, we suggest that you avoid these trails.

**Important:** the temperature will drop as you gain elevation, so pack an extra layer of clothing and a rain jacket to keep a cool high-country shower. Bring plenty of drinking water; none available on the trail.

**Warning:** in spring and fall, when the upper part of this trail is snow-covered, there is avalanche danger.

#### Trails in winter

There are many opportunities to enjoy Jasper National Park's trails in the winter months. Please ask for the brochure *Winter Trails* for more information.

**Important:** the temperature will drop as you gain elevation, so pack an extra layer of clothing and a rain jacket to keep a cool high-country shower. Bring plenty of drinking water; none available on the trail.

**Warning:** in spring and fall, when the upper part of this trail is snow-covered, there is avalanche danger.

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### All trail users please note

- Share the trail. Treat other users with courtesy and respect.
- Stay on the trail. Short-cutting and going around mudholes or snow damages trail-side vegetation.
- Choose a trail that matches your ability. Reading this guide will help, as will asking park staff or outdoor-shop employees.
- Some trails are restricted to pedestrians only.
- Creating new trails without authorization is not allowed.
- Be prepared! Jasper National Park is a wilderness area. Caution and self-reliance are essential.

### Mountain-bikers —

- Please avoid skidding. Looking your brakes causes severe erosion.
- When approaching other trail users, slow down. When passing from behind, sound your bike bell or call out well in advance, and ask to pass.
- Pedestrians and horses have the right of way. When horses approach, you should stop, move your bike off the lower side of the trail and wait there until they pass by.

### National-park basics

- Motorized vehicles on public roads only
- Pack out litter
- Please don't feed wildlife
- Keep food away from wildlife
- No picking or collecting

significance unknown), where you may see Barrow's goldeneye ducks and loons. Past upper Mina Lake you can shortcut back to town via Trail 8c. To reach Riley Lake, small but scenic, continue on Trail 8c, following it along the south shore of Cottonwood Slough. At the junction with Trail 2, turn right to get back to Jasper.

### Map-signs and trail markers

To help you find your way around the town-area trail network, the Friends of Jasper National Park have provided **map-signs** at trail intersections. These signs show you exactly where you are. They are oriented such that if you are looking north when standing directly in front of one.

To make extra sure you don't take a wrong turn, the Friends have also installed **numbered trail markers** at each intersection. Just look around and find the yellow marker with the number of the trail you want. You'll also find these handy trail markers at intersections with animal trails and unofficial trails, and at other places where it might be easy to lose your way.

If you see a damaged sign, please report it at the Park Information Centre in Jasper.

### Jasper National Park of Canada

Box 10, Jasper, Alberta T0E 1E0  
Information: 780-852-6176  
www.parksCanada.gc.ca/jasper

**Trail problems?** Please report them to any park employee.

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Design, writing, maps and layout by Ben Gadd



Parks Canada thanks the Friends of Jasper National Park for help in funding this publication

For more information, call 1-800-955-4767 or visit www.friendsofjaspark.com

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And strangely, I was getting along just fine with Parks Canada.

They began hiring me to put my writing and graphic-design skills to work on items such as this, a new trail map of the Jasper area.

Paid for by the Friends of Jasper National Park, JNP's newly formed cooperating association, *Summer Trails* was available for free at the park information centre and elsewhere.

It came folded up. You could stick it in your back pocket and carry it with you. Very popular, *Summer Trails* is still available, updated as needed.



In 1989 Cia and I started the Jasper Institute, a series of weekend summer field courses in the park. It was patterned on the summer institutes offered in many U.S. national parks. The Friends of Jasper National Park sponsored it.

Here's a group of JI participants in Cavell Meadows. They are learning about alpine wildflowers from botanist Elisabeth Beaubien. She's the one in the red sweater. That's the Angel Glacier in the background.



The Jasper area has a great trail network, but it's complex. When Cia and I arrived in 1980, there was little directional signage. It took us a couple of summers to find our way around. And we often had to give directions to lost hikers. So in 1997 I worked with the Friends of Jasper National Park to fix that. I drew up professional-quality trail maps...

Jasper National Park  
Yours to protect and enjoy!

Le parc national Jasper  
Protégez-le, profitez-en!



Sign damage?  
Please call 852-4767

Ce panneau est endommagé?  
Veuillez composer le 852-4767



And had them silk-screened onto extra-tough plastic as map-signs. These were being used in some Alberta provincial parks, and I figured that they would work here, too. They did.

Set on sturdy metal posts, my map-signs were installed at every trail junction in the network. Also, small yellow markers were stuck onto trees at these intersections. Each marker had a trail number on it. The map-signs were all oriented such that a hiker would be facing north when reading one. Looking up, the hiker would see the number on the marker indicating the trail they wished to follow.

Other markers were installed here and there along the trail at confusing spots. All this was much appreciated by trail users. The Friends received awards for it.

## *In the shadow of Mount Robson*

# Quartzite, from seabed to waterfall

Mount Robson sits on a solid base of **quartzite**—rock made of quartz, the hardest rock in the Rockies. You can see Mount Robson's tough quartzite in the low cliff on the opposite bank of the river.

The rock is also old: early Cambrian, deposited in shallow seawater half a billion years ago.

A collision between the continent of North America and chains of islands on the floor of the Pacific Ocean thrust this part of the Rockies skyward about 110 million years ago, raising the quartzite high above sea level and bending it into folds.

The quartzite beds seen at this viewpoint are hard and thick, resistant to erosion. The tilt of the layers forces the rushing water to lift each loosened block before it can be washed downstream.



So these beds erode more slowly than the surrounding layers, and a waterfall results.



TRANS MOUNTAIN

I also got into producing interpretive signs. As the years went by, I wrote and illustrated a lot of these, some of them for national parks but most of them for provincial parks in Alberta and British Columbia. Here's one a I did for the Kinney Lake Trail in Mount Robson Provincial Park, about a hundred kilometres west of Jasper.

This one was in Jarvis Lakes Provincial Park near Hinton.





# Cadomin Cave: More than an Easy Afternoon Stroll

It's only two kilometres to the cave, but the elevation gain is 340 m, much of it very steep. The trail is narrow. The upper end is in a windy, exposed place. So don't start out unless you are fit and prepared, with good footwear, proper outdoor clothing, and a jacket to repel a cold mountain rain shower.

**B**ring a snack to keep your energy level up. The water in Cave Creek is not recommended for drinking, so carry water you know to be safe.

Please stay on the marked trail. This prevents damage to the wildflowers and other sensitive trail-side vegetation. It's also safer and much easier to stay on the trail, because rocks tend to roll down the steep shortcuts.

Caving is a risky sport. If you're planning to enter the cave, be sure to follow the clothing and equipment advice given on another sign here at the parking lot.

Commercial cave guides are available. If you don't have much caving experience, consider going on a professionally guided trip the first time, so you can safely learn the basics. Call us at 780-723-8554 for the names of park-approved guiding services. All commercial guides require a permit.

Unguided parties: the maximum group size for unguided parties is six persons.

## Cave Conservation

Caves are rare in Alberta, and Cadomin Cave is an important one. It's a special place that needs to be treated with care.

- Bats hibernate in the cave in winter. These harmless little animals are valuable bug-eaters, and are protected by law. Under regulation, the cave and approach trail are closed from September 1 to May 1 to protect the bats.

- From August 1 to August 31, when the bats are most active, visitors must vacate the cave and be 100 metres away from the entrance between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Urinating and defecating in the cave pollute the water running through it, affecting the cave's ecology. Please use the facilities here before starting your trip.
- No pets are allowed in the cave. Pets must be kept on a leash along the trail.
- The Cadomin Cave Trail and Cadomin Cave are in the Whitehorse Wildland Preservation Zone. Hunting and camping are not allowed, and access is by foot only.
- The cavers' motto is "Save the cave!" So, as they also say, "Take-only pictures and leave only footprints." If you find any trash, please pick it up and carry it back to the containers here. Collecting anything natural in Cadomin Cave—even a rock from the floor—is unlawful.

*Be careful, have fun, and please do your part to protect Cadomin Cave.  
It belongs to us all.*



Guiding by Cadomin Cave.  
Photo by [unintelligible]

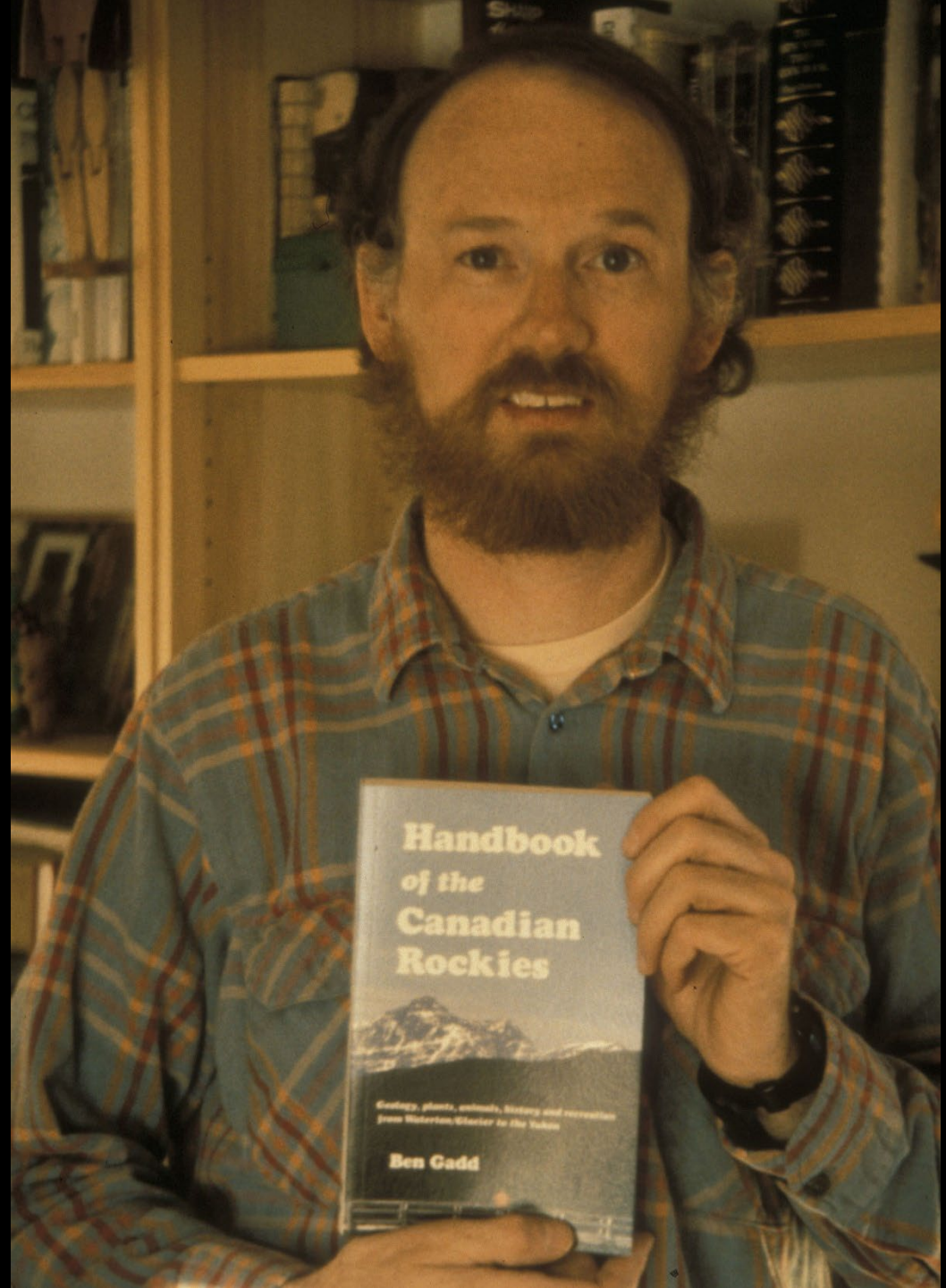
And this one was near the start of the path to Cadomin Cave, also near Hinton, to tell people headed for the cave what to expect. The photo they used was one of me speaking to a group I was guiding in the cave. We shall see that image again a few slides on.

Meanwhile I had been working on *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*. It was written with the people I had been guiding in mind. Most of my clients had university degrees, and they were keen to learn more about the mountains.

Four years after starting the project, I self-published my *Handbook* in 1986. It's not that publishers weren't interested. Several of them were. But the ones who offered me a reasonable advance wanted to take the book over completely, and the ones who were going to let me do the design and layout didn't offer enough.

So in the end, Cia and I published it ourselves. Turned out to be the best thing we could have done.

Now in its second edition, this book continues to sell well. And as writer, layout artist, publisher and shipping boy, I have made far more money on it than I would have if we had gone the normal route.



To this day, I'll be walking along some trail and come across a hiker reading the *Handbook*.  
Gladdens my heart.



If you write a book about the Rockies, people figure that you must know something about the Rockies. So they pay you to show them around.

When the *Handbook* came out, my interpretive-guiding business really took off. I sometimes had too much work, which I'd pass along to other interpretive guides, more of whom were being licensed by Parks Canada to replace the government park interpreters, who were becoming fewer and fewer.

I could have hired these people myself and grown my business into the main outlet for park interpretation in JNP. Parks Canada would have found that quite acceptable. But I wasn't into it. I was still hoping that Parks Canada would see the light and get back into doing interpretation itself.

To some extent it did, but not like it once had.



Whatever, I was out with the public a lot, which is all I wanted. Here's a group learning about Rockies rivers by standing in one, the Fraser not far from its headwaters.



I've had some embarrassing moments, too. Like this one, when I showed up to give an interpretive talk in Mount Robson park with a dead snowshoe hare wedged into the bumper of my van.

My wife and I had heard a thump as we were driving beside Moose Lake. We stopped the car and looked underneath, expecting to see something there. Nope. But the horrified expressions on the faces of my group when I drove up showed that I had neglected to check the front of the car.



Cadomin Cave was on Alberta crown land that wasn't in any park, provincial or national, but I found that my park business licence and experience qualified me to guide people there. Here's the original of that photo used on the interp sign about the cave.





Here's a shot taken at the entrance after a tour. Front view...



Rear view.



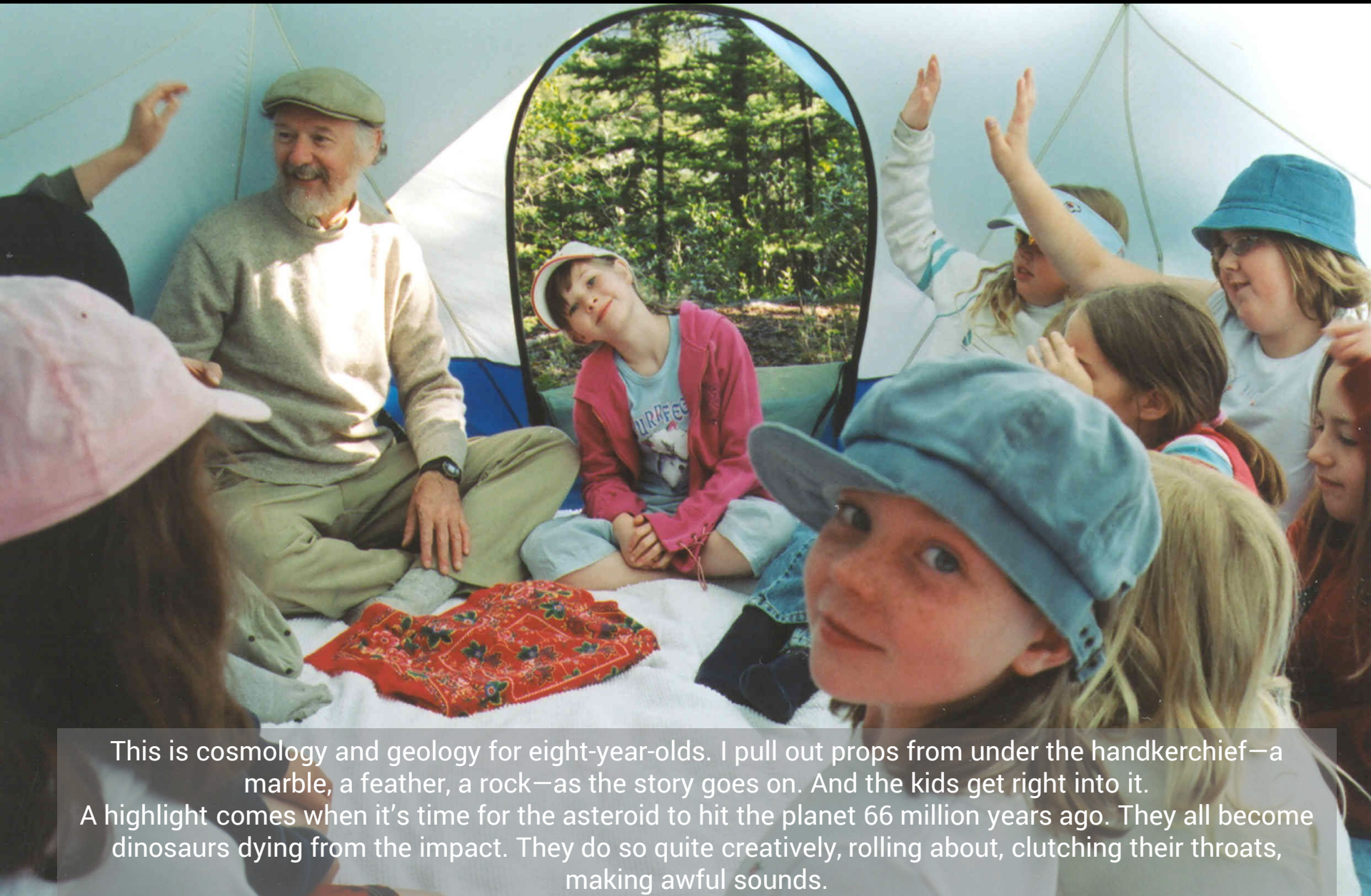
Despite my beard and my rather severe look, kids have always warmed up to me.



And I've spoken to lots of school groups during their outdoor-ed trips to Jasper.



My favorite thing to do is pop up this large tent in a campground and meet the class there. We all go inside. Then, as the sign indicates, I tell them the story of the Earth.



This is cosmology and geology for eight-year-olds. I pull out props from under the handkerchief—a marble, a feather, a rock—as the story goes on. And the kids get right into it. A highlight comes when it's time for the asteroid to hit the planet 66 million years ago. They all become dinosaurs dying from the impact. They do so quite creatively, rolling about, clutching their throats, making awful sounds.

The trick is to get them to *stop* dying and move on to the next thing in the talk.

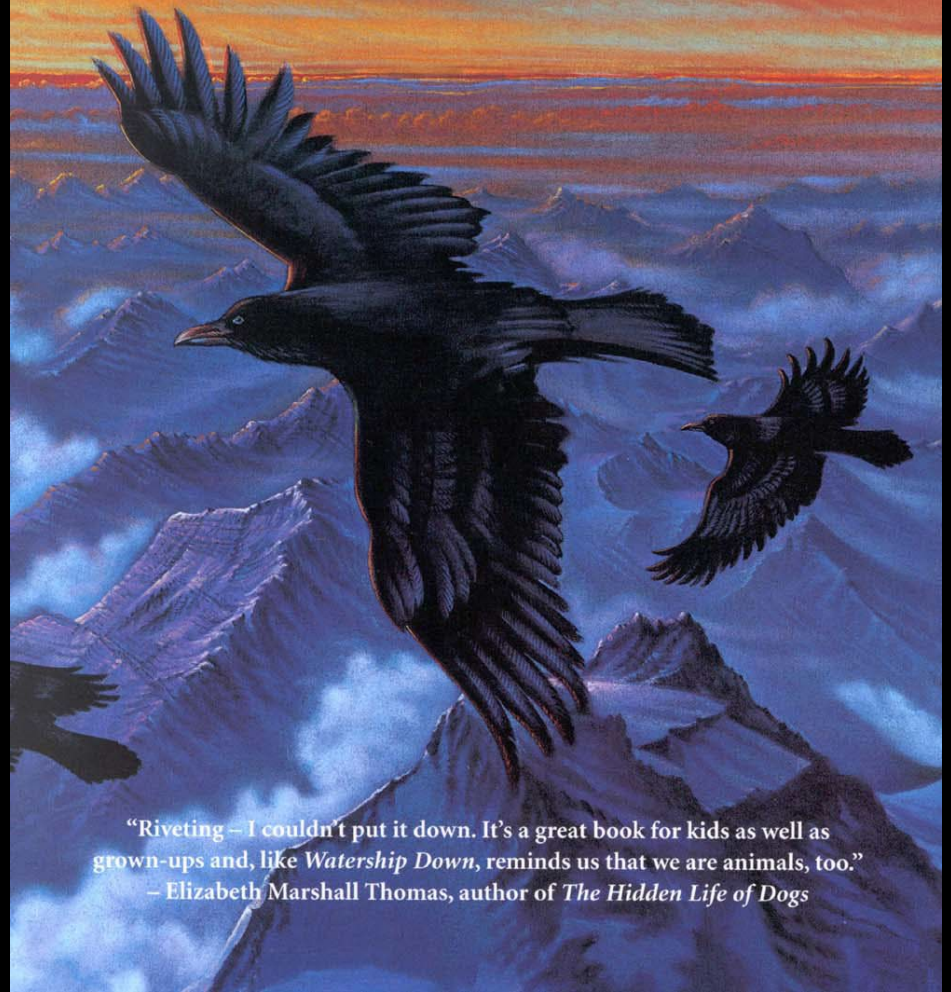
In 2001 my novel about ravens came out. It was my first book-length work of fiction, yet somehow I lucked out and got published by McClelland and Stewart, Canada's best-known press. Even though *Raven's End* remains popular, it is no longer being published by M&S. There's a long and interesting story to that, but it's the subject for another talk.

"A real winner . . . irresistible." – *Edmonton Journal*

B E N G A D D

# RAVEN'S END

*A Tale from the Canadian Rockies*



"Riveting – I couldn't put it down. It's a great book for kids as well as grown-ups and, like *Watership Down*, reminds us that we are animals, too."

– Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, author of *The Hidden Life of Dogs*



Kids in grades five, six, seven and eight *love* this story. And I love to read to them aloud from it. Most “author visits,” as the teachers call it, are one-off affairs, but the elementary school in Jasper invited me to read the whole thing in twenty-three one-hour installments. So did Canmore Elementary after we moved there in 2009.



When the kids are too young for the book, there is other stuff we can do in the library.

Back to the trail-guiding.

Some of my client groups would come back year after year. I would take them places that few park visitors go, such as this spot west of Jasper, on day two of what has become known as the "Victoria Cross Ranges Traverse." The people with me were members of the Seattle Mountaineers.

This was my favorite back-country adventure. I worked out the route in the early 1980s.

We would start by scrambling to the top of Pyramid Mountain, then go partway down the other side and follow the ridges westward, well above the treeline, dropping down twice to camp on the tundra at the heads of remote valleys.

No campfire was allowed, no digging around the tent, nothing to indicate that we had ever been there.

We'd be in back of beyond. For most of these folks it was once in a lifetime.



And sometimes that lifetime was about to end. The fellow on the left had incurable brain cancer. His brother, on the right, called to say that one of the things the chap wished to do before he died was to go on a short backpacking trip with me. I obliged, of course, taking the two of them on the Skyline Trail. And not charging them anything.



In 2004 I almost got killed myself.  
Fell off Indian Ridge above Jasper.  
Went ten metres onto my head and  
woke up with a park warden giving  
me oxygen.

The group with me was the bunch  
from the Seattle Mountaineers.  
Good thing. They knew just what  
to do.

"Wow, this was, like, a *scenario*,"  
one of them said as we all sat in  
my living room in Jasper  
afterward. I was concussed and  
not making much sense, but we  
were all enjoying Cia's spaghetti.



There's more to my career as an interpretive guide in the Canadian Rockies, but by now I think you've got the idea.  
It has been a grand adventure. Thanks for letting me share it with you.





Thanks also to Parks Canada for some of the slides I showed. And thanks especially to the people of Canada, who many years ago saw fit to make this peak, which is Mount Edith Cavell, the centrepiece of Jasper National Park, one of the world's great protected areas. JNP was my home for twenty-nine years.

END