

THE BRODIE CLUB

Minutes of the 916 th Meeting of the Brodie Club

November 19, 1996

The meeting was held in Room 430 Ramsay Wright Building, U. of T.

Approval of previous meetings minutes moved by Speakman, seconded by Fowles.

Announcements;

Riley indicated that at the FON 65th anniversary dinner, a Life membership was conferred on Carrick and Bruce Falls was given the Gunn award.

Next meeting will be on December 10, 96 in Room 430 Ramsay Wright. (Moved by Falls, seconded by Carrick)

Guests

Aird (M) - Linda Pim (G)

Huff (M) - Rob Nesbitt (G)

Hussell(M)-Ken Abraham and George Fairfield(G)

Introduction of Speakers by Falls; Fowle , Rapley, Huff and Riley speaking on the recent World Conservation Congress in Montreal.

Rapley:

Rapley was the first speaker, explaining he was attending as a representative of the Metro Toronto Zoological Society. He indicated that the IUCN has 880 members and more than 3,000 delegates attended the Congress.- 57 workshops and 10 concurrent streams. It Costs an organization about \$900 per year to be a member, an individual can be a member of Canadian Council of the IUCN for \$50.

Rapley talked about the fact the International Fund for Animal Welfare was turned^{down} for membership-circulated a copy of the IUCN Red Data Book for examination by members-efforts were made to have cod placed on the endangered species list (efforts failed)-David Brackett is the new Commissioner of the Species Survival group.-Rapley talked of attending Conservation Breeding group sessions on the Hornbill and attending the Komodo dragon session with Carrick (not in Montreal)-79 Species Survival plans have been developed-Rapley discussed the new Endangered Species legislation in general terms-Rapley outlined some of the Metro zoo's programs dealing with habitat preservation and endangered species, and promised more detail at a field visit to the zoo.

NOTES ON THE WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

19 November 1996

John Riley

The run-up to the World Conservation Congress in Montreal had all the trappings of big government and big media. It was easy to be sceptical, musing on all the glossy previews on the train from Toronto to Montreal.

But the World Conservation Congress was very serious business. It was the largest conservation gathering since the Rio Earth Summit, with more than 2000 delegates. Hundreds more attended workshops and special events, and more than 150 journalists attended from around the world. By the end of it, Canada had announced two national parks, some serious conservation measures for Banff, and endangered species legislation.

The 125 congress resolutions were a world tour of international issues over the course of several days. Some of the resolutions dealt with: debt relief and environmental accounting; the "precautionary principle" in environmental decisions; indigenous peoples and their rights to natural resources; the survival of species and the protection of parks; the world economy in wood and forest product certification; global climate change; military impacts on nature; marine protected areas; and the world network of biosphere reserves; sustainable ecotourism; migrating fish stocks, and the by-catch of fish, mammals and birds; superquarries; and many others.

There wasn't a single environmental issue familiar to Ontarians that wasn't tabled, discussed and the subject matter of workshops or exhibitions. Business leaders made their case that environmental progress is clearly happening, but that population and resource limits are ahead. There were predictions from the World Bank that another crunch is coming between poor and rich countries. Leaders of major transnationals said that the private sector will have to take over the job of environmental leadership because governments are vacating the field. This was particularly disconcerting, but was proven out by various sessions on the development of industry benchmarks, standards and indicator measures. Businessmen also talked about green-washing and appearance-management, and there was a lot of this happening at the c by both business and government.

Media leaders talked about the difficulty in interesting the media or public in "big issues" like biodiversity, population, or the depletion of fresh water, energy, food, wood or other resources. They talked about conservationists telling better stories to hold the public's attention, and about survival techniques being foremost on people's minds.

The congress was sobering. There were delegates from China and from dissident groups discussing the wording of resolutions on Chinese dam projects in Tibet. There were delegates from ENGOs in Nigeria and adjacent countries arguing against a resolution condemning Nigeria for killing local environmentalists, because of possible Nigerian back-lash against families, resources and countries.

It brought home to me what an incredibly privileged, isolated and protected place Ontario is!

Tucked under a superpower's security blanket. Cutting forests that have never been cut before, clearing lands never farmed before, and developing mineral resources never known before. Living in an energy bubble of cheap gas and oil, with so much freshwater and clear air that we can flush and disperse and dissolve more waste per capita than anyone else. In an artificial bubble of cheap food and natural resources. From this perspective, our environmental problems look exceedingly minor.

Very few of the congress resolutions were local and even fewer dealt with Canada. Clayoquet was on the roster and so was Banff. I was on my way to Montreal to table a resolution on Ontario's Temagami issue.

Just the rumour of a Temagami resolution had caused the provincial government to pull its congress presentations of sustainable forestry and its Crown Forest Sustainability Act. This is the Act that is now before the courts because of the ministry's failure to adopt a planning manual to standardise forestry practices for the province. We probably did the government a favour by scaring it off and by avoiding some further embarrassment on that issue.

Basically, we don't want Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Park, at the core of Temagami, to continue to be listed as a "threatened" area by the international community. It could be de-listed if the government accepted the local planning council's recommendation to protect the headwater areas of the streams and lakes feeding into Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater. Such an easy problem to solve by international standards.

So, Canada signs the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. Ontario signs on to the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. Congresses get held; full of circumstance, perhaps like being at the head table on the Titanic. Nations around the world take it all very seriously but in Ontario it's definitely the economy and debt first.

The resolution on Temagami was passed unanimously by the World Conservation Union. The government of Canada abstained, after calling Ontario to ask whether they wanted any intervention. The government of Ontario said no, they weren't interested.

Riley spoke from notes attached. Riley indicated that parks Canada spent five million on the Conference (how much did other Dept. Spend?)-was interested in the discussions on indigenous people, seals, fur trading and how the resolutions were dealt with 150 journalists in attendance- during the session 2 National parks announced-Gov't responded to a tabled resolution on Banff asking for tough regs. And management criteria-Clayoquot Sound announced as World Biosphere site- Martin Edwards was in charge of IUCN elections and provided assistance to Riley with the resolution process. 126 resolutions tabled more than 14 hours-fascinated by how effective the resolution process worked and how it was taken seriously used an example of the Chinese being considerate of concerns of groups worried about Chinese mega-dams being built in Tibet-how resolutions dealing with the execution of Saro Wiwa failed because of the implication for Nigerian NGO reps and neighboring countries-in contrast to worldwide situations the conservation situation in Ontario is quite good- efforts to expand the seal hunt (failed)-talked of the process involved in getting a Temagami resolution passed.

Fowle:

Fowle participated as a private citizen-fascinated by the variety of people and cultures represented-outlined some of the philosophical underpinning of the Congress flowed from the World Conservation Strategy, Our Common Future, and Caring for the earth-Theme of the Congress were sustain ability of nature, loss of biodiversity, equitable distribution of benefits of a natural world (how can local people profit from such things as ecotourism)-emphasis on the fact that in developing countries the scale of the problems is huge-gender issues, most of the successful work seems done by women and the difficulties of involving women in these projects, problems of them being excluded by political process, when women are involved chances of success increases. (Fowles has a series of quotations which should be attached to minutes) Fowles was particularly impressed by a paper by Mansfield (New Zealand) dealing with restoration ecology-observed that some of the papers described regeneration not restoration important to realize that a theme of equity ran through the Congress.

Huff:

Talked of how the Congress has some relationship to a trade conference, and talked on the intra-conference politics-observed that there was a small number of Ontarians present- circulated materials-also commented on the loss of valuable information as we loss more and more staff in ministries and libraries and no apparent effort to manage the information.

Rapley:

Indicated that the IUCN is moving some offices to Montreal, suggests that IUCN will be paying more attention to temperate and boreal forests-and it will also be the French IUCN facility.

Questions:

Bendell: Will the Transactions be published?

Fowle: Yes

Aird: You said conservation was in good shape in Ontario-compared to elsewhere

Speakman: What about issue related to (over) population (growth).

Riley: There were no resolutions on population.

Nesbitt: Has watched the Endangered Species for a long time and sees the new Legislation as acting as an entrenchment of COSEWIC and is not sure this is a good idea?

Rapley: The concern is valid, and outlined details of the proposed legislation-Fowle pointed out that the red data book has become entrenched.

Observations:

Nesbitt: Golden eagles (2) flying over Darlington Prov. Park on weekend-noticed road kill possum near Port Hope-prompting speculation whether the invasive populations from Niagara and Brockville area have joined up.

Speakman: Along Hwy. 404 noticed vireo's in field-hawks using the light standards as perches-noted crows feeding near bird feeder.

Fowle: Recalled Broadwing hawk landing on a lamp standard near the Spit, and sliding down the arc of the light armature.

Bodsworth: Believes crows are urbanizing-takes only a single owl to show you how many crows are around-has seen up to 40 crows harassing a single owl.

George Fairfield: Noted foxes at Mt. Pleasant cemetery were poaching candles from grave sites. Foxes have appeared to eliminated black squirrels from the cemetery. Abraham and Hussel, noted that the foxes maybe dealing with the candles like the tallow rabies baits.

Rapley: Cougar sighting at Twin Rivers near the Rouge. Mentioned the Canadian Field naturalist had an article in late 1980's mapping cougar sightings.

Fowle: Had seen recent TV coverage of Cougar near Mt. Hope.

Notes:

Savage has had another stroke and is in Sunnybrook -will be there until at least the weekend-Betty Wilson, Academy of Medicine has been moving materials from his home to the Faunal Lab as well as Brodie Club memorabilia. His collection of the Auk will go to the zoo library.

Meeting Adjourned at 10.25.

Janet Cooper gave report on Dr. Savage - Jennifer Young arranged to send flowers.

Meeting Chairman - Bruce Falls

Meeting Recorder - Don Huff