



PART ONE

*The West We Had:
Foundations of Place*





A Walk into the Past

Setting a Context of Place

KICKING HORSE POND

A small water feature
near Field, B.C., in Yoho
National Park.

Photograph by R.W. Sandford.

THE UNESCO CANADIAN ROCKY Mountain Parks World Heritage Site is so large that it is impossible to see in one lifetime. I am not as diligent and persistent as others have been in the quest to see it all, but I have worked at exploring as much of this great protected area as possible for the last forty years. I can honestly say that I know the map pretty well and can visualize the general geography of this entire vast domain. There are places, however, where mountains, valleys, glaciers and rivers are remembered only as end points in what could have been much more protracted explorations. There are valleys that, had I more time and energy, would have led me to missing places in my mental construct of this part of the mountain West. There are passes that, had I crossed them, would have taken me to fabled wild valleys only mentioned very generally in park reports. These places were only known in any depth by Park Wardens or Rangers who had spent their entire careers in the backcountry.

So it is that on the downslide from the summit of youth I still find myself with a long list of places I ache to visit, all of them remote. Most are in the Mountain Parks. And that is what our long-planned and much anticipated expedition to the backcountry was about: appreciation of

the greatest cultural heritage achievement in the history of the Canadian West. It was also meant as an inquiry into how our mountains are changing and what, in the context of those changes, this protected place will mean to our future as a region and as a nation.

Our walking trip into the very southern part of Banff National Park was planned in association with a Parks Canada Warden who has worked extensively in all the mountain national parks. During the forty years he has spent with the National Parks Service, most of it in the specialty of mountain rescue, Gord Irwin has seen as much of the expanded UNESCO Mountain Parks as anyone I know. But even he has not seen it all.

We had been planning this trip for a long time, but for me there always seemed to be more urgent treks to make. Because there are so few who know enough about them or who can articulate good reasons for defending such unknown, almost secret, places from the fate that has already befallen so many other sanctuaries – many are lost without ever being known. The spring comes and the migrating birds arrive to find that another forest has disappeared, the vegetation gone right to bedrock or covered with houses. Travelling widely out of the cities as I do it is hard not to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the change that is occurring. Everything of value on or beneath the surface of the West is being ripped out of the ground and shipped away to distant, often foreign places. Once one has witnessed the extent of transformation that has taken place in a single generation in and around the Mountain Parks, they begin to look and feel like an island amidst a West that is being flayed and then eaten alive.

There are many ways to enter the Mountain Parks. Most will know the highway portals: the Trans-Canada, which takes travellers through Banff and Yoho National Parks; the Yellowhead, which penetrates Jasper National Park and Mount Robson Provincial Park; and Highway 93, which slices vertically along the Great Divide through Jasper, Banff and Kootenay National Parks. There are also trails that can provide hiking, biking and horse access at dozens of points on all sides of the contiguous 400-kilometre-long and 150-kilometre-wide “wilderness.”

As we wanted to access southern Banff National Park, we had a number of options. We chose, because we had only three days, to access the remotest part of the Spray River headwaters region from Burstall Pass in adjacent Peter Lougheed Provincial Park.

Irwin and I had company on our trip. He was accompanied by his partner, Marie-Pierre Rogeau, whom he met when she began research into the forest fire history of the mountain National Parks in 1991. Since



BURSTALL PASS

The trail to Burstall Pass in the Kananaskis is a popular day hike that takes in mountain scenery as spectacular as any found in the Rockies. Few, however, take the time to drop down the west side of the pass into the wild upper regions of the Spray River in Banff National Park. Left to right: M.P. Rogeau, Landon Sandford, Bob Sandford, and Gord Irwin.

Photograph by Vi Sandford.

that time, “M-P,” as she is known, has become an acknowledged expert on fire succession in Canadian forests. I was accompanied by my wife Vi and our then-twelve-year-old son, Landon, who in the last year had taken an interest in where he lives and had asked if he might be included in this experience.

We did not get what locals would call an “alpine start.” After dropping a vehicle off at Mount Shark trailhead we arrived at the beginning of the Burstall Pass trail at about 11:30 a.m. We were fortunate, however, that we were past the summer’s peak heat. Even though it was only mid-August the light was already tending toward the oblique richness of autumn when every detail of the landscape is thrown into magnificent relief.

Less than an hour later, we stopped at the edge of an outwash plain where melt from the Robertson Glacier meanders through patches of willow to meet Burstall Creek. After lunch we started up the 2,380 metre pass. We stopped for a rest on the flats above the first big hill where we admired a great slab of perfectly smooth stone on the west face of Whistling Ridge that appeared to have been created by an enormous rock slide along a near-vertical fault line. Beyond the great slab we

could see the massive walls of 3,400 metre Mount Sir Douglas, which dominates the head of the valley.

That I am not fit became clear as we climbed the last ridge of the pass. Landon danced all around me as I puffed and sweated my way to the summit. While pausing to catch my breath, we discovered a family of ptarmigan hiding stock-still among the rocks. Their adaptive colouration is so perfect you have to startle them to see them. It was as if the rocks miraculously produced a hen and four chicks only to have them disappear again when you stopped looking at them.

As we dropped a few metres down from the summit, the Matterhorn-like peak of Mount Assiniboine came into view. Just the sight of this great tower evokes myth. After a brief rest we began the steep descent into the utter wilderness that lay before us at the headwaters of the Spray. It was like crossing a border into a remote land I had dreamed for years of visiting. You could immediately feel the difference between the west side of the pass and the one we had climbed: like suddenly dropping back into time.

The trail on the west slopes of Burstall Pass has started to grow in from disuse. Moss on the path suggested to Irwin that more horses pass this way today than hikers. That did not mean, however, that we were alone. Within only a few kilometres we discovered signs of grizzlies, wolves, coyotes, martens, moose, elk and deer. There was something larger than us here and more ancient – a presence we didn't feel elsewhere. We descended step by step into the ineffable, into the sacred. As we followed the trail toward the valley, the tracks of a moose became the moose itself. We stared at it in silent awe, all five of us watching it watch us. What does it do to one, I wondered, to see such things and to see such places? Only good I suspect.

At a spring near the valley floor we stopped to drink water so good and so cold that every cell in my body thirsted for it. By the time we made the junction with the main Spray Valley trail, I was so tired I kept walking so I wouldn't fall down. Irwin, who as a fully accredited mountain guide is experienced in helping tired people reach their goal, made light of it. We jokingly formalized the Law of Relative Distance wherein three kilometres is always shorter leaving a backcountry cabin than it is when arriving, especially after a long day.

Vi, who had been carrying an enormous pack, unloaded enchiladas, wine and two cans of beer. There were appetizers and cold drinks. I drank glass after glass of water. No one was in a hurry to eat. There was nothing to hurry for, which allowed us time for simple conversation.

I said to Irwin that this part of the upper Spray River valley reminded me of the Rocky Forks area on the south boundary of Jasper National Park where I visited him just after he became a district warden in 1976. He replied that the similarity between Palliser and Rocky Forks was the main reason he was happy to come into this most southerly part of the Mountain Parks.

He went on to say, though it appeared completely wild on many maps, the block of parks comprising the World Heritage Site were in fact badly fragmented by national highways, roads, towns, railways, pipelines and heavily used trails. Fragmentation was being continually exacerbated by human use. There was a time, he explained, when protection goals were the highest priority in the management of the mountain park system. It was his view that Parks Canada had in recent years focussed on the quality of visitor experience as its central management priority, at the cost of core ecological values. He was concerned that the pendulum had swung too far in favour of visitor experience and too far away from protection.

Places like the upper reaches of the Spray, in his estimation, remained largely unaffected by front-country policy directions only because they had never been opened to mountain biking and other mechanical incursions. Though very accessible, they were seldom visited except by wardens on horse patrols and hikers committed to a multi-day back-country adventure. Such adventurers, Irwin remarked, were becoming fewer. The recent popularity of backpacking, which began in the late 1960s and lasted into the early 1980s, has ended. Most hikers today want to spend the day on the trail and then return to civilization for a comfortable bed and a restaurant meal.

Another incursion the Palliser District had been spared, according to Irwin, was the intense focus of contemporary ecosystem management. In large areas of the Mountain Parks, landscape and environmental processes can no longer be described as self-willed. Put bluntly, these landscapes are no longer allowed to manage themselves. Instead, Parks Canada manages them according to its perceived needs and visitor expectations. In other words, having lost the self-willed capacity to change in directions defined by their own intrinsic qualities and dynamics, these landscapes are no longer wild. This is not a minor point but is the devil's bargain you make when a wilderness is designated a national or provincial park, at least in places where surrounding areas have been compromised by a variety of human uses. You are forced to manage at least as much for visitor needs as you are for ecosystem needs.



PALLISER MEADOWS

Due to its relatively low altitude, longer growing season, and abundant water resources, the upper reaches of the Spray River provide excellent year-round habitat for elk and moose, wolves and grizzlies whose tracks can be found everywhere in the valley.

Photograph by Vi Sandford.

We have reached the point where we have interfered so much with the greater natural ecosystem function of the Canadian West that the kinds of ecosystems we have created cannot continue to function without our constant intervention.

The foundation for contemporary management of protected areas in Canada's mountain West is a concept called ecological integrity. As cumulative effects of development and increased visitation in Banff National Park put into relief outdated wildlife management strategies such as predator control, exotic species introduction, wildlife population control and fire suppression, new concepts of ecological understanding have emerged. The most compelling of these is the idea of maintaining the integrity and connectivity of existing mountain ecosystems.

Ecological integrity, in the context of national parks, means the minimization of human impacts on natural processes of ecological change. This requires management of both people and the manipulation of natural processes. From an ecosystem point of view it means not letting your ecosystems become unnaturally fragmented or diminished in vitality. It means keeping all natural processes operative, including fire, predation, insects and even some forms of disease, which isn't as easy as it sounds.

When natural systems become islandized, they are subject to a whole range of influences we are only beginning to understand, all of which contribute to diminishment and ecological loss. We have learned, for example, that a newly islandized reserve will *temporarily* hold a full complement of its original species. What happens next, however, is that the big island is made into a series of smaller islands by roads, rails and trails. Wild landscapes are reduced to dysfunctional fragments. Species then begin to disappear. This is what is happening presently throughout the Rockies. Human population growth is tearing the wild out of the West.

Humans tend to overwhelm natural landscapes. Conservationists like Stephen Mayer in the United States have claimed the human presence is now so pervasive that we have effectively taken over processes of natural selection. Ecologists argue that our planet's remaining ecosystems are now divided into two types: intact systems and relic communities that have no hope of surviving over the long term without extensive human support. Relic communities are composed of ghost species – plants and animals that have no hope unless we help them. While the ecosystem that comprised much of the Mountain Parks was once considered intact, it is being increasingly islandized by outside land-use changes and uncomplimentary human activities. There is legitimate fear that some species like the mountain caribou, the grizzly and the wolf are already relic species and are expected to become ghost species by the end of the twenty-first century. For those who believe that the presence of these creatures is what defines the mountain West as unique, this is alarming news. Protecting endangered species is expensive. We don't know how many we have the knowledge to support. Some landscapes are changing so quickly, we don't know if some species can even survive in the circumstances that are emerging. Only one thing seems certain. The West is not as wild as it once was. It is not as wild as most Canadians think it is and it is nowhere as wild as we tell the rest of the world it is. Reality is coming up hard against some of our most cherished myths.

While Landon would have entertained us all night with his witty perspectives on our world, I pulled the thick wool blankets over me and by 10:30 p.m. had forgotten my aching bones in satisfying but strangely alert sleep. I felt I was returning to primal patterns of being that resided just below the surface of my civilized self. It was the sleep of the hunter – and the hunted.

The valley to which we awoke was filled with smoke. As is typical in late summer, there was a big forest fire burning to the south, perhaps

as far away as the United States, and winds were pushing its smoke into the upper reaches of the Spray. Besides smoke, the valley was filled with history, mystery and names.

The names of the peaks and watercourses in this area derive from the patriotic obsessions of Arthur Oliver Wheeler, the commissioner representing British Columbia for the survey appointed to delimit the boundary between British Columbia and Alberta from 1913 through 1924. Wheeler made sure that British, Canadian and French generals were all remembered, major land and naval battles commemorated, and heroes elevated to permanent memory, by having peaks in the Canadian Rockies named after them. Burstall Pass, Lake and Mountain, for example, were named in 1918 for Lieutenant-General Sir E.H. Burstall, the commander of Canada's troops in Europe in World War I. In 1918, Wheeler named the highest mountain in the area, 3,400 metre Mount Sir Douglas, after Field Marshall Haig, the commander of British forces in France.

While Wheeler's commemoration of heroes of World War I is thought provoking, the real history of this valley is connected with the Palliser Expedition. John Palliser was born into an aristocratic Irish family of British descent in British-occupied Ireland in 1817. He grew up in Waterford County where he served in the military and eventually became county sheriff. At the age of thirty, Palliser made a trip to North America to hunt buffalo on the Great Plains. His book, *Solitary Rambles and Adventures of a Hunter in the Prairies*, published in 1853, was widely read in England and no doubt influential in his choice as leader of the government-funded British North American Exploring Expedition, which travelled over large areas of the unmapped West between 1857 and 1860. The instructions for the expedition were very clearly defined in a letter the Secretary of State of the British government sent to Palliser in late March of 1859:

From Fort Garry you will start, as soon as you have organized your party, in a westwardly direction, taking such course as you shall consider most advisable for acquiring additional knowledge of the country on either side of the Bow River or south branch of the Saskatchewan River and south of the southern branch, and thence proceeding westward to the headwaters of that river, you will endeavor from the best information you can collect to ascertain whether one or more practical passes exist over the Rocky Mountains through British territory, and south of that known to exist between Mount Brown and Mount Hooker.¹

While there were certainly plenty of political reasons for the British government to support such an expedition, the Palliser inquiry into the West also possessed a serious scientific focus:

It being the desire of Her Majesty's Government that the Expedition should, as far as practicable, be made available for extending general as well as specific scientific knowledge, I have to impress upon you the importance, in addition to maintaining a regular series of instrumental observations, of regularly recording the physical features of the country through which you pass, noting its principal elevations, the nature of its soil, its capacity for agriculture, the quality and quantity of timber, and any indications of coal or other minerals.²

Palliser was also instructed to keep a journal of all the expedition's observations and to forward duplicate copies at every favourable opportunity to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on Downing Street in London.

When the expedition reached the front ranges of the Rockies in the summer of 1858, Palliser split the duties of his men so as to ensure that they were able to explore as much of the region as possible. Palliser departed from Old Bow Fort on the Bow River on August 18, forded the Bow above the Kananaskis and then, with much difficulty owing to the amount of burnt and fallen timber, followed the Kananaskis to just below its origins at what is now called the Haig Glacier, and then crossed North Kananaskis Pass into what is now British Columbia. From the height of land at North Kananaskis Pass the Palliser party dropped into the valley of what is now known as the Palliser River, which they followed to its junction with the Kootenay River. After further exploration and a number of exciting adventures involving local Native peoples, they re-crossed the Rockies and made for Fort Edmonton, where they had arranged with the Hudson's Bay Company to spend the winter.

While Captain Palliser was exploring the Kananaskis, another member of his expedition was fighting for his survival in what is now Yoho National Park. James Hector was a geologist and medical doctor with a great interest in the Canadian West. While Palliser went south from Old Bow Fort, Hector went west. Following the Bow River to what he named Castle Mountain, he then crossed the Great Divide into British Columbia by what is now called Vermilion Pass. He then followed the Vermilion River to where it joins the Kootenay at what is now Kootenay Crossing Warden Station and then ascended the Kootenay to the height of land that divides it from the Wapta River, one of

the principal tributaries of the Columbia. He soon found himself at the junction of the Wapta and a larger river that, after a dangerous incident involving a pack horse, he called the Kicking Horse. He then followed the river to its headwaters at Kicking Horse Pass where he crossed back into what is now Alberta. Hector next followed the Bow River to its source at Bow Lake, and then crossed Bow Pass into the Mistaya Valley in Banff National Park. He followed the North Saskatchewan to Rocky Mountain House and eventually to Fort Edmonton.

When we add up all these travels, we begin to appreciate why the Palliser Expedition is so important to this region and why the Palliser name carries such weight in the upper reaches of the Spray. While history focuses on the impacts of the Palliser Expedition on ending the Hudson's Bay Company's control over Rupert's Land, the definition of the Palliser triangle in agricultural history and the opening of the Canadian prairies to settlement, his influence was also very significant in the mountain West. Fur trader and map maker David Thompson may have travelled more in areas now encompassed in the Mountain Parks, but his detailed observations are eclipsed by the careful accumulation of scientific observations made in the region not just by Palliser himself, but by geologist James Hector, botanist Eugene Bourgeau and Astronomer Royal Thomas Blakiston.

My front-step meditations on names, naming and the history of this valley were interrupted by the sounds of an approaching helicopter, which surprised us by landing right in front of the cabin. The purpose of the flight was to drop off equipment to be used in an ongoing study of genetic diversity in existing grizzly bear populations, to better understand genetic dispersal along linked corridors in the Yellowstone-to-Yukon conservation study area. The goals of this study are a reminder that even the Mountain Parks are not an ideal wildlife reserve. The assemblage of reserves is not the right shape to optimize survival of islandized species. A round reserve will sustain more species than an elongated one and clusters of reserves have a better chance of keeping their original complement of species than one alone. The DNA study will assist in identification of critical bear habitat at any given time of the year, and avenues of connectivity between different bear habitats. While I recognized the value of such research, I could not help but hear the voice of Stephen Meyer whispering to me in the wind generated by the helicopter blades:

Our most common tools for preserving biodiversity – prohibitory laws and regulations, bioreserves, and sustainable-development programs – are themselves powerful engines of human selection, tweaking (for our pleasure) but not fundamentally altering the outcome: massive species loss with the attendant disappearance of the wild.³

Here we were in the middle of one of the last truly wild places in Banff National Park and the cavalry had just arrived to help advance further human direction of natural selection. Critics of national park wildlife management programs wonder why Parks Canada bothers putting so much effort into saving the grizzly bear. The answer is simple: without this species the West is not the West as we know it. Though originally designated for their remarkable geological features, the Mountain Parks would not be a wilderness if we lost the great bear. Whatever it costs, we should do everything within our power to save this species, for in saving it we save everything it symbolizes.

When the silence returns after the departure of the helicopter, I am suddenly very interested in walking to Leman Lake where a number of bear-rubbing trees have been identified and modified to unobtrusively collect grizzly hair for DNA analysis. The very thought of grizzlies in this valley makes me feel alive.

There was a bald eagle circling high above us as we left the cabin. As we walked through the buckbrush we stirred up thousands of white butterflies that circled us as we walked. The butterflies have one or two dots on each quarter-sized wing. Likely they are *Pierus marginalis*, or a related species of what are common known as the Veined White.

As we crested the old moraine that confines the waters of Leman Lake, M-P pointed out one of the bear-rubbing trees. It was an alpine fir right on the trail, perfectly located to allow grizzlies to scratch itches on their backs. An “x” was constructed of barbed wire at the bottom of the likely scratch zone to collect hair that would later be analyzed for its DNA content. This would allow the identification of the individual bear that left the hair and establish its relationship to other bears in the area and larger region. Some 46 trees were apparently rigged in this way to unobtrusively determine the health of the grizzly gene pool in and around this area of the Mountain Parks.

As we reached the log jams on the shore of the lake, we noticed that the fire smoke had become thicker. While bald eagles floated in circles above us, we talked, skipped rocks into the water and ate a leisurely lunch. We were two kilometres from Spray Pass. Irwin explained that the pass is

now accessible from British Columbia by high clearance two-wheel drive vehicles. An all-weather road can take motorists to within a 40-minute walk of the boundary of Banff National Park. This same distance can be covered in less than 15 minutes on one of today's high tech all-terrain vehicles and even more quickly in good conditions on a snowmobile.

This is how such places are irreversibly lost. First they become surrounded. Old trails into the great sanctuaries are upgraded to seismic or logging roads. Then they are gravelled and opened for year-round use. Today hunters are less of a problem than they used to be, not just in relative but also in absolute numbers. While hunting traditionally put some pressure on wildlife populations, its current impact is slight compared to the damage caused by snowmobiling, the unregulated use of all-terrain vehicles and the opening up of mountain biking trails. Together these activities have not only fragmented landscapes but also resulted in far greater stress on wildlife, especially at critical times in their life cycle.

As Yellowstone National Park managers learned to their deep regret that, once such activities are permitted on a large enough scale to support commercial enterprises, the lobby they create makes it impossible to end their use, no matter how much damage they may cause. While park managers very prudently eliminated snowmobile use in Canada's Rocky Mountain national parks in 1972, it is permitted up to the boundaries on all sides of the Mountain Park block.

As I was still tired from the walk in, Landon and I headed back toward Palliser Cabin while the others walked the two kilometres to Spray Pass. Bushwhacking from the lake shore back up to the trail, we found white geraniums among the cow parsnip and the hellebore. I had never seen white geraniums in Banff National Park. It isn't just the machines entering the park, but a northward shift of many species of plants and animals with the increase in average night-time and winter temperatures. There are already nearly 100 invasive plant species in the Mountain Parks. Most of these, however, were introduced from Europe or Asia and brought to the mountains on the wind, accidentally on trains, in the wheel wells and on the tires of cars, or in feed for horses. Climate warming will likely exacerbate the problem of invasive species by creating circumstances favourable to weeds that do well in disrupted places. The problem with invasives is that they take over ecosystems and use a disproportionate amount of their limited energy. Over time they choke out endemic species and reduce biodiversity.

As we have caused and continue to cause considerable landscape disruption in the Canadian West, we should expect a great many new

TOWARDS LEMAN LAKE

Its low elevation and proximity to Palliser Pass make Lemman Lake an excellent place to study the grizzly bear movement into and out of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site. Gord Irwin poses for a photograph, on the trail in the midst of ideal of grizzly habitat.

Photograph by Vi Sandford.



arrivals of species from the south and be ready for other problematic arrivals from Europe and Asia. We know that our mountain ecosystems have already begun to disassemble under the influence of changing climate and have begun to reassemble in ways we can't predict. Historically, these ecosystems were largely defined by cold. When cold becomes less of a factor, the ecosystems can change dramatically in as short a time as a single human generation.

Back at Palliser Cabin I drank three litres of cold, clear water drawn from Birdwood Creek. I found myself thinking about our increasingly water-scarce world. The Mountain Parks generate most of the water in the prairie West. We know, however, that climate change is already affecting the timing and extent of precipitation in these mountains. Most people in Alberta don't see these changes because they are buffered by the ecological composition, extent and character of the Mountain Parks. This vast area of relatively stable, long-established ecological relationships slows down the galloping influence of outside changes and invasions. By minimizing human impacts on this fragile landscape we slow the impacts of climate change on our ecosystems, allowing ourselves more time to mitigate undesirable causes and adapt to projected changes. In so doing we also protect the water resources crucial to the entire West and buy time to learn more about managing changing ecosystems toward stability and sustainability.

These unimpaired landscapes of the mountain West are the headwaters of our unique identity. Seen in this light, nature here is offering us the best deal it has offered our species since it provided us with the

opportunity to create agriculture. For the mere cost of restraint, we buy as much stability as exists in the natural world. For the cost of leaving the place alone we buy a reliable source of clean water and a functioning thermostat that will keep the West cool until we turn down the heat in our global atmosphere. We would be crazy not to continue to accept such gifts.

I woke up the next day wishing we didn't have to leave. When the cabin was exactly as we found it and Irwin had completed his entry into the log book, we set out down-valley toward Bryant Creek and the Shark Mountain trailhead some 16 kilometres distant.

The trail follows the gentle incline of the valley downhill along the Spray River. We stopped to rest at places along the river that were so beautiful, where the water was so clear and cold and the light so rich there was no question we had found the paradise we sought. I did not want to speak for fear of breaking the spell.

From the Spray Bridge, the trail to Mount Shark is a trail in name only. Actually it is a road. Even though we had only been gone for three days, it seemed odd to encounter other people. We were soon out of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site as it is now defined. As we re-entered Kananaskis Country it occurred to me that it took years for me to see this heavily used but beautiful and much-loved landscape for what it is really is: it is a landscape of hope, for the Rocky Mountains and for the West. That heavily logged, mined and dammed places such as the Kananaskis can recover to the extent it has is a symbol of great possibility. In recognizing the value of what we had, even badly damaged landscapes can be restored. If they are adjacent to wildness, as Kananaskis is, we can leave them to do much of the restoration themselves.

We met hikers in growing numbers as we approached the busy trailhead. They were all clearly happy just to be in these mountains. All of them loved the Rockies. Most were young and had only a beginner's sense of just how remarkable this landscape is and just how valuable places like these are to the West, to the world and to our global future. But each one seemed eager to know and experience more, which was why they were there. Our common optimism and appreciation for our mountain places suggests it is not too late to restore what we have lost and to build a culture commensurate with what we have already preserved. By honouring our past we can create the West we want. We have done it once and we can do it again. All we have to do is want to.