

## Letters

# Fighting for our pristine waters

Last week's announcement by federal Fisheries and Oceans Minister Jonathan Wilkinson that the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel would not be reclassified under the most recent Species at Risk Act review was welcome news to many in our community.

It was a testament to how the combined efforts of local organizations and elected officials can ensure that well-intentioned actions do not have unintended consequences on communities.

The federal government actively engages in the protection of at-risk aquatic species making classification decisions based on scientific advice and in keeping with the concerns of communities, while carefully considering the health and stability of the economy.

This year, the government was considering the addition or reclassification of 31 aquatic animals under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). These species include 23 freshwater fish and

eight molluscs, including the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel (RMRM).

To inform its decision, the government undertook a comprehensive 30-day public comment period and considered further evidence provided by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

In April, Anna Warwick Sears, executive director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, travelled to Ottawa to provide testimony to the standing committee to make the case that reclassifying the RMRM would risk the OBWB's efforts to manage invasive Eurasian milfoil in the Okanagan's lakes.

As Warwick Sears noted, as our source of clean drinking water and the water-based economy we depend on and keeping these water sources clean and pristine, there were simply far too many unanswered questions

and lack of recent data to reclassify the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel, which had the potential to make it difficult to control harmful Eurasian milfoil.

Probably the most important job I have as an MP, apart from ensuring that our community's funding priorities are met, is to avert potential risks to the community when legislative changes are being considered.

Previously, I had worked with Minister LeBanc to ensure we received federal funding to support OBWB efforts in the fight to prevent zebra and quagga mussels entering our Okanagan lakes, and I am pleased to say that Minister Wilkinson was sensitive to the potential impact the listing of the RMRM would have on the OBWB's ability to control the

milfoil.

By reclassifying the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel as endangered under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), we have successfully averted a risk to our local economy and our environment.

I would like to thank Warwick Sears and the OBWB for their excellent work and attention to this important issue, as well as the local communities who provided input and support.

British Columbians value our clean, healthy waters and understand the irreversible impact invasive species can have both on the economy and our quality of life.

I am committed to working with the OBWB and local municipalities to ensure that the federal government continues to recognize the challenges we are facing, and where possible, provide support so that we may preserve this valuable and essential resource for generations to come.

*Stephen Fuhr is the Liberal MP for Kelowna-Lake Country.*

### MP's Report

STEPHEN FUHR



# Canada needs more immigrants

### To the editor:

There are 65 million refugees fleeing persecution and war while Canada's population can sustain 215 million more people.

I am arguing in favour of mass immigration. Switzerland maintains a population of eight million people per 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>. If British Columbia were to match these numbers, B.C. could bring in another 150 million new Canadians (rounding down due to its rugged, mountainous terrain).

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba share similar geographic features with the United Kingdom. These three provinces combined are eight times larger than the U.K.

Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan are nearly two million km<sup>2</sup> while the U.K. is 243,000 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 70 million people.

In comparison, Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan could increase their population by at least 65 million to meet the U.K.'s standard.

Subtracting Canada's protected forests (40 per cent of our land) and an increase of 215 million new Canadians, our population density would be 43 people per km<sup>2</sup>.

This is still less than Japan, an island with no natural resources and a higher standard of living which boasts 336 people per km<sup>2</sup> or France with 120 people per km<sup>2</sup>.

I found an excerpt from a Globe and Mail article that sums up a Canadian model of immigration perfectly. "If just the narrow strip of land upon which most Canadians live were to develop the population density of the Netherlands or England, then the overall population would be more than 400 million. A quarter of that density would give Canada's southern

strip the population density of Spain or Romania, two big countries noted for their huge, unspoiled tracts of nature. The remaining 90 per cent of Canada would remain largely untouched — modern immigration takes place in already urbanized areas." (Saunders, 2018).

Another way to look at immigration is in terms of defence spending.

With a population of 215 million and a GDP expenditure meeting NATO's standardized target of two per cent, Canada could increase its defence budget from \$20 billion to over \$180 billion, nearly three times that of France's defence expenditure (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018).

In conclusion, I would say Canada needs more immigrants.

**Raymond Theriault**  
Kelowna

# Conservative leader flubs 'gotcha' moment

Like many Canadians, I saw the video posted by the Conservatives last week about a "chance encounter" between their leader and the Prime Minister of Canada in Dieppe, NB.

I imagine it's uncommon for political party leaders to "bump into" one another; you see it at larger events such as Vancouver's Pride (well, not Scheer, of course) and the occasional showing of unity on major issues that goes beyond partisanship.

Every party has their own summer BBQ circuit for the leadership, and there's always other events for

them to be at. It's a big country.

So when you see what we saw at a celebration event like the National Acadian Day event, it's not only rare but it's an opportunity for each leader to put on their best behaviour and show some sportsmanship.

Instead of that, you get a truculent Scheer approaching Trudeau in a rather aggressive fashion. You see this at public events all the time, but usually it's a heckler or an individual with an axe to grind that speaks for no one but themselves.

Obviously it was staged and planned by the Conservatives.

They tried, and failed, to make

political hay out of a ham-fisted and frankly immature attempt to play "gotcha" with the prime minister.

Trudeau handled this like he would any other rude individual at a public event.

That has to stick in Scheer's craw. Trudeau didn't flinch, didn't engage, and moved on pressing the flesh with Canadians.

There's a lesson in all this: At a public event, if you aspire to be taken seriously, let alone to reside in 24 Sussex, don't try to embarrass your opponent.

You can see how clear the divide is

between what it means to be prime minister and how to conduct yourself accordingly, and the behaviour of a man who seemingly wants to hold that title.

Whoever hatched this idea, or didn't tell Scheer that it was a bad one, should feel embarrassed.

They made their party leader look like an amateur heckler who just summed up every ounce of courage he had to bully the PM, and failed spectacularly, and that's neither good optics nor, more important, good judgment.

**Richard McAdam**  
Kelowna

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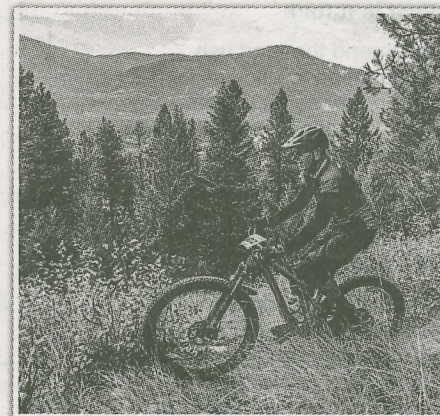
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