



# Annual Report

## 2005-2006

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## **1 Message from the President**

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The past year has been an active one at the Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology. As you will see in the following pages, many of our members and other interested people have been busy organizing, presenting, or otherwise participating in a wide variety of educational and research-based activities. Our year got off to a 'hot' start with the well-attended and well-received conference titled "Implications of Climate Change in BC's Southern Interior Forests". This thought provoking international meeting of researchers, educators, and students had many individuals contemplating a variety of ecological effects that rapid human-induced climatic change is having on our regional ecosystems. Importantly, this meeting also focused on the types of management, social trade-offs, and adaptations that we will have to make in the future to protect the integrity of the ecosystems in which we live.

Our second large event for the year was a two day conference called "Identifying Critical Habitat: Methods, Issues, and Solutions". The irony of the juxtaposition of these meetings will not be lost on the many people who study species that are, or will be, threatened by the effects of climate change. Identifying critical habitat for species at risk is a relatively new task that biologists are faced with, as larger numbers of organisms face extinction in Canada and elsewhere.

Filling in the spaces between these conferences were a number of smaller, but still important, events. Our well attended "Statistics for Biologists: A Refresher Course" taught by Dr. Carl Schwarz from Simon Fraser University, ran several times this past year and was well received by participants. On the community education front, CMI hosted the Creating Bear Smart Communities workshop, which included a one day session on sustainability for non-profit societies in the environment sector.

The energy and interest that participants shared at these events was phenomenal, and my hat goes off to the dedicated groups of volunteers that organized these successes, and the agencies that generously supported these events with in-kind or financial contributions.

This has also been a successful financial year for the Institute. We cautiously forecasted a breakeven budget and ended up with \$15,960.16 more than we spent. Although some of these earnings are the result of projects started in previous years, the considerable workload that CMI completed this year is also reflected here. I should emphasize that this was a capacity effort for our small organization of one staff person, a volunteer Board, and volunteers on all of our organizing committees. An important strategy for the Board in the future will be to make sure that burn-out of our active members and constituents does not occur.

This leads me to a very pleasant task of offering my, and the Institute's, heartfelt thanks to this year's CMI Directors for their continued hard labours. Countless hours have been offered by this group of keen minds to keep the organization both current and effective. As always, thanks must go to Jackie Morris, CMI's Executive Director and the main cog in our operation, for her tireless planning and administration.

I would also like to say a special thank-you to both John Woods and Guy Woods. These two long-serving directors have helped shape and steer CMI since its beginnings, and the success of this Institute is in no small part their legacy. They are leaving Director duties, but we know that their interest remains in the mission of the Institute.

Brendan Wilson, President  
Columbia Mountains Institute

## **2 Operation of the Columbia Mountains Institute**

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### **2.1 About the Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology**

The purpose of the Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology is to increase awareness and knowledge about the ecology of the Columbia Mountains and regional ecosystems.

The CMI was incorporated as a society in 1996, and is based in Revelstoke, British Columbia. The society is directed by a maximum of fifteen Board members. An Executive Director supports the Board on a contractual basis. Bookkeeping and webmaster services are also contracted out.

### **2.2 Board of Directors for 2005-2006**

#### **Executive**

Brendan Wilson, President	Selkirk College
Ian Adams, Vice-President	Corvus Communications
Del Williams, Treasurer	Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation
Susan Hall, Secretary	Parks Canada

#### **Directors**

Karen Bray	Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program
Patrick Daigle	BC Ministry of Environment
Jenny Feick	BC Ministry of Environment
Evelyn Hamilton	BC Ministry of Forests and Range
Rachel Holt	Veridian Ecological Consulting
Ian Parfitt	Selkirk College
Chris Steeger	Pandion Ecological Research
Guy Woods	BC Ministry of Environment
John Woods	Parks Canada

#### **Staff**

Jackie Morris

Directors' meetings were held on the second Thursday of each month in May and June, and on the second Monday of each month thereafter, with the exception of July and August. Minutes of meetings are on record at the CMI office.

## **2.3 Membership of the Columbia Mountains Institute**

The Columbia Mountains Institute ended the year with 75 regular members, 5 student members, and 29 corporate members. Over 275 people receive the CMI emailed updates directly at their computers. The updates are circulated widely within some of the corporate memberships.

### **CMI Corporate Members for 2005-2006**

- BC Hydro, Generation Environment, Burnaby Office
- BC Hydro - Columbia Generation
- Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission
- Canadian Mountain Holidays
- City of Revelstoke
- College of the Rockies
- Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program
- Conservation Northwest
- Dillon Consulting
- Downie Timber
- DWB Forestry Services Ltd.
- Forest Extension and Research Partnership
- Friends of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier
- Golder Associates
- Great Canadian Heliskiing
- Guide Outfitters Association of BC
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, Ecosystem Conservation, Victoria Office
- Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity Branch, Victoria Office
- Minto Manor Bed and Breakfast
- Mustang Powder Lodge
- Nanuq Consulting Ltd.
- Okanagan University College
- Parks Canada, Ecosystem Services, Calgary Office
- Parks Canada, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks
- Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation
- Selkirk College, School of Renewable Resources
- Tembec Forest Industries
- West Fraser Plywood
- Wildsight

## **2.4 Supporters of the Columbia Mountains Institute**

The Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology gratefully acknowledges the financial and in-kind support of agencies that are willing to partner with us to make our events and our projects a success. The generosity of these agencies is recognized in the list of conferences on the CMI website ([www.cmiae.org](http://www.cmiae.org)).

We also acknowledge the large number of volunteer hours contributed to the CMI by our Board of Directors, and by the members of the organizing committees for our various events. These people keep us well connected to ecological issues in southeastern BC. The CMI continues to be effective due to their willing contributions of time and knowledge.

## **2.5 Administrative Changes for the Columbia Mountains Institute**

In September 2005 we purchased a new computer for the office. This computer is transported to each event to run presentations. Jackie also purchased a removable hard drive to facilitate backing up files.

In June our bookkeeper returned to a previous position, and we changed to a new bookkeeper. Financial statements are now produced monthly instead of quarterly.

A PowerPoint presentation was prepared for the use of Directors and others wishing to promote the CMI. This presentation will need annual up-dating.

### **3 Activities of the Columbia Mountains Institute**

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#### **3.1 Education**

##### **Workshops and Courses**

A major goal of the CMI is to identify current ecological issues, then host workshops or courses to address these issues. The following events were held in 2005-2006. More details about each of these events and a list of event partners and supporters are available on the CMI website in the "Past Events" section.

This was a very busy year for the CMI. As noted in last year's Annual Report, some of the background work for these events took place in 2004-2005. Nevertheless, the amount of activity we saw this year is all the CMI can handle with the current capacity of one staff person, a volunteer Board of Directors, and volunteer organizing committees for events.

The Statistics Refresher for Biologists course has been hugely popular. CMI offered it three times this year, and we have likely saturated our local market for at least a year. Simon Fraser has a number of other courses that may prove of high relevance to the CMI market, and we will explore whether we can offer some of them at reasonable costs.

Not having enough registrations to run the *Applying DNA Methods to Wildlife Studies* course may be a result of the methodologies being more widely understood than when we ran the very first version of this course in 1999, and of having saturated our local market with previous offerings. It may be possible to run the course again but promotion will have to be wide spread across the continent with a year's lead time.

##### **CMI Annual General Meeting 2005**

April 26, 2005 - Revelstoke Community Centre, Revelstoke, BC

In most years, the CMI's Annual General Meeting is held in concert with the Annual Researchers' Meeting. This year, because the Implications of Climate Change in BC's Southern Interior Forests workshop was held at the time we normally have the Annual Researchers' Meeting, we did not host an Annual Researchers' Meeting.

## **Implications of Climate Change in British Columbia's Southern Interior Forests**

April 26-27, 2005 - Revelstoke, BC, Canada

On the first day of this two day event, about 115 participants learned about climate models and what they are projecting for British Columbia. Then they heard experts speak about the implications of a changing climate for fire, insects, ecosystems, biodiversity, birds, and mountain caribou. On the second morning, presentations were on the use of models to visualize climate change, on responses of the Ministry of Forests to climate change, and on approaches for resource managers who need to plan for the uncertainties of a changing climate. The second afternoon was spent in breakout sessions, trying to put the knowledge gained at the workshop into practice. Using case studies for a managed forest and a protected area, workshop participants reviewed management objectives, identified vulnerabilities, and suggested adaptation strategies. A summary of the workshop presentations and notes from the breakout groups is available on the CMI website as a free PDF download.

## **Statistics for Biologists – A Refresher Course**

May 31- June 2, 2005, Coast Hillcrest Hotel, Revelstoke BC

This was a repeat of the course taught by Dr. Carl Schwarz of Simon Fraser University.

## **Statistics for Biologists – A Refresher Course**

June 7-9, 2005, Sandman Hotel, Castlegar BC

Another repeat of Dr. Schwarz's course. The course was taught in Castlegar at the request of the Golder office located there. Over half of the course participants were Golder employees.

## **Identifying Critical Habitat: Methods, Issues and Solutions**

October 18-19, 2005 - Cranbrook BC

At this two day conference, 125 participants heard talks from federal and provincial government staff, and consulting biologists, on the methods and issues surrounding identification of critical habitat. As there is no "cookbook" approach suitable for all situations, presenters were chosen for their experiences with a variety of species and situations. A conference summary was prepared, and is available as free PDF download from the CMI website.

On October 20, CMI Director Ian Adams led 18 participants in a field trip from Cranbrook to Radium Hot Springs.

Also on October 20, 18 people attended a session offered by Karyn Sutherland and Susan Leech of FORREX ([www.forrex.org](http://www.forrex.org)) titled "ABCs of Planning a Communication Strategy that Works".

### **Creating Bear Aware Communities**

November 2-3, 2005 – Revelstoke Community Centre, Revelstoke BC

On November 2, participants heard about the components of the provincial Bear Smart Community Program and how its principles were being put into action in various communities around the province.

Participants were introduced to people and resources that can support them in making their communities Bear Aware and Bear Smart.

On November 3, participants from Bear Aware and conservation-oriented community groups took part in an interactive workshop to learn the steps to achieving sustainability, including an understanding of the factors that promote sustainability, how to define goals, plan programs, and find funding. This workshop was led by Kylie Hutchinson, of Community Solutions Planning and Evaluation (<http://www.communitysolutions.ca>).

A summary of the workshop is available as a free PDF download from the CMI website.

### **Statistics for Biologists – A Refresher Course**

November 15-17, 2005 – Hillcrest Hotel, Revelstoke BC

Another repeat of Dr. Schwarz's course.

### **Applying DNA Methods to Wildlife Studies**

April 4-7, 2006 - Revelstoke BC

This course was cancelled due to a low number of registrations. A small loss shows on our books due to the time spent in 2005-2006 to organize this event.

### **GPS Radiotelemetry in Wildlife Research**

May 10-11, 2006, Selkirk College, Castlegar BC

This conference was organized by Selkirk College. CMI's involvement was to provide Jackie's expertise at hosting events, on a fee basis. Two CMI Directors, who are also instructors at Selkirk College, assisted with the event. This conference was cancelled due to a lack of registrants.

### **Educational Projects**

#### **Funds for Revelstoke students to attend CMI events**

Three years ago, the Revelstoke Community Initiatives Fund, which is supported by the Columbia Basin Trust, granted the CMI funds to bring local students to our conferences. Over the years, several senior science and geography students attended events held in Revelstoke. Although the CMI events assume a knowledge level above that of a high school student, the classes were able to see what a science conference was like; take pride that their community could host such a conference; and undoubtedly there

was at least some knowledge gained from listening to the talks. In 2005-2006 the remaining project funds were used up.

### **Educational Support for the North Kootenay Recovery Implementation Group (NKRIG) for mountain caribou**

Two years ago the Columbia Basin Trust awarded CMI funds to assist with bringing in speakers and providing information to the NKRIG. The goal was to provide educational opportunities that would assist the group to make better decisions regarding caribou recovery in the north Kootenays. Funds were also used to support the Mountain Caribou Compendium, a library of documents related to caribou management that is maintained by the CMI. The NKRIG requested only one presentation, and since the group is no longer active, unused funds were returned to the Columbia Basin Trust.

### **Mountain Caribou Compendium**

The Mountain Caribou Compendium is a non-circulating set of 175+ documents related to caribou biology and management. It is housed in the CMI office in Revelstoke. The CMI website contains a complete list of the documents and includes abstracts. Where possible, hyperlinks are provided to digital versions of the complete paper. The print version of the Compendium received only one visitor this year but our website statistics show the entry page to the Compendium was viewed 496 times this year.

### **Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN)**

CMI is a member of CBEEN and has participated in the progress of this new group. CBEEN and CMI exchange notices and event information for the benefit of members of both groups.

### **Events Currently Underway**

The following is a list of events and projects begun in 2005-2006 and continuing into 2006-2007:

*CMI Annual Researchers' Meeting 2006*

April 27-28, Nelson BC

*Multidisciplinary Approaches to Recovering Mountain Caribou in Mountain Ecosystems*

May 29-31, 2006, Revelstoke BC

*Bear Conservation in a Fast Changing North America*

October 24-25, 2006, Revelstoke BC

*Ordinary and Multiple Regression Course*

November, 2006, Revelstoke BC

## 3.2 Supporting Applied Ecological Research

### *Research Projects*

This year the CMI assisted with two research projects.

- *Songbird Use of Four Floodplain Vegetation Types in the Revelstoke Reach, Upper Arrow Reservoir, British Columbia.* This project was essentially completed in 2004-2005 with the reporting done in 2005-2006.
- *Quantifying forest stand and landscape attributes that influence mountain caribou habitat fragmentation.* CMI is assisting Rob Serrouya with administration for a component of this research project. This part of the project is due for completion by the end of June 2006.

### *CMI Email Bulletins*

The CMI's email bulletins provide members with updates on CMI news, funding sources, websites, new documents, job postings, workshops, and other topics of interest to researchers in the field of applied ecology. Messages are grouped and sent as a monthly bulletin. Sixteen bulletins were sent in 2005-2006. A print archive of the emails is maintained at the CMI office. An on-line archive of these bulletins is available on the CMI website, although it is always several months out of date (receiving the bulletins is a privilege of membership in the CMI.) Bulletins are sent to over 270 people, and distributed further within the networks of our corporate members.

### *CMI Website ([www.cmiae.org](http://www.cmiae.org))*

This year the CMI website was given a new look with a revised banner and a new front page. Navigation in the site is now much easier. Jackie now maintains the "Upcoming Events" section of the website herself, which has made updating the site with new information more convenient.

The CMI website continues to provide information on current ecological issues to members and the general public. The website was visited 60,500 times from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. This represents a drop of about 18% in use since last year, for no apparent reason.

Popular pages on the CMI website continue to be:

- Anything about bears or mountain caribou. Most of these files are in the National Park Feature Articles section; thus are likely viewed by the general public and school children, and not our key audience of resource managers.

- CMI event information and summaries of past workshops
- National park feature articles – for some reason, the information on pikas and the pika sound file are of high interest.
- Bibliography on the *Effects of highways and other linear developments on wildlife populations*.

The CMI produces a summary of presentations after every event (not courses). These are made available as a free download from our website. Thus the information from the events is made available to a much wider spectrum of people than were able to attend the event. The following table shows how many times each of the files for this year's summaries were opened. Clearly it is worthwhile posting the information on our website.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Month that summary was posted</b>	<b>Number of downloads as of March 31, 2006</b>
Implications of Climate Change in BC's Southern Interior Forests, April 2005	October 2005	779
Identifying Critical Habitat: Methods, Issues and Solutions, October 2005	March 2005	85
Creating Bear Smart Communities, November 2005	February 2005	70

As time permits the website will continue to be updated and grow. Priorities for updating are the Links section and the archive of CMI Member's Email Updates.

### **3.3 Collaboration**

In May of 2005, a Contribution Agreement was signed with Parks Canada (Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks). This five year agreement means that Parks Canada will contribute \$3000 to CMI's operating budget for each of the next five years. Supporting the Columbia Mountains Institute furthers Parks Canada's interest in maintaining environmental integrity both inside and outside the national park boundaries.

A Memorandum of Understanding is in now in place with Rob Serrouya. This year the CMI assisted Rob with administration of funds from the Endangered Species Recovery Fund.

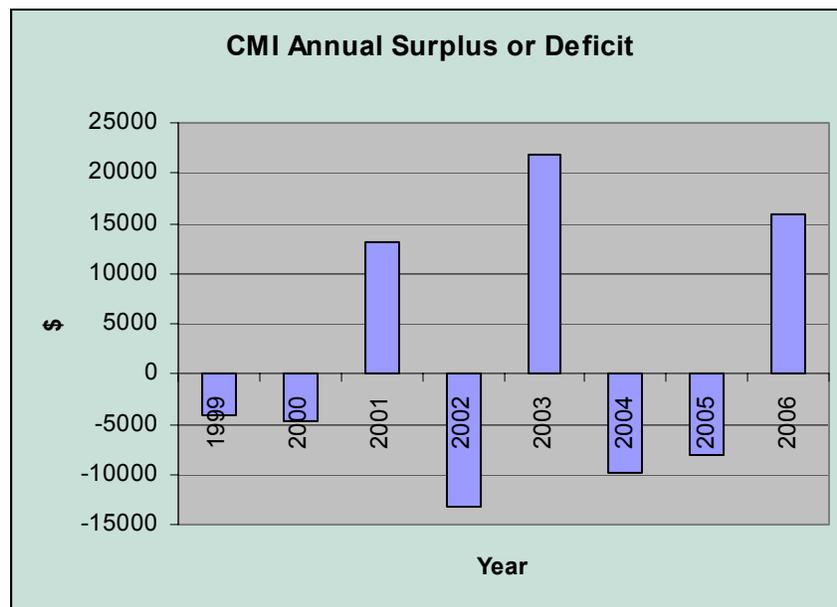
CMI's conferences are a success because of collaborative efforts by government and private agencies. In-kind and financial support from these partners enables our events serve the needs of these agencies, CMI members, and the greater public.

## 4 Preface to Financial Statement

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The un-audited financial statements report a **net surplus of \$15,960.16** for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006 and an **accumulated surplus of \$34,174.78**. We had cautiously predicted a break-even budget for 2005-2006, but high attendance at our events and courses has instead provided CMI with a healthy bottom line. We are now in a better financial position with which to continue our mandate.

Our organization typically fluctuates between annual deficits and surpluses as shown in the chart below. The fluctuations reflect the cyclical nature of providing workshops and conferences.



*Year-end surplus/deficit for CMI between 1999 and 2006*

Operating funds for CMI come primarily from the proceeds of our conferences, from our membership fees, and from contract administration revenues. Contract administration fees and membership fees are kept as low as possible, and smaller events usually operate on a break-even basis or produce small surpluses. Larger scale financial “success” comes from major, well-attended events that typically happen every 2 to 3 years. Past examples include the *Mountain Caribou in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Ecosystems* and *Managing for Bears in Forested Environments* conferences. In 2005-2006 fiscal year, *Implications of Climate Change in British Columbia's Southern Interior Forests* and *Identifying*

*Critical Habitat: Methods, Issues and Solutions* workshops both provided significant revenues.

We are very grateful to our members and our volunteer Board of Directors for continuing to keep us in touch with current ecological issues and skill development needs – this is what keeps our events relevant and well attended. The support of our partners and event sponsors is also acknowledged as important to our society's financial standing.

Del Williams  
Treasurer  
Columbia Mountains Institute

*The financial statement for 2005-2006 appears on the following two pages.  
The website version of this report does not include the financial statement.*