

# Gwen

BARLEE  
Memorial Fund

**A national wilderness  
champion's work continues**



**WILDERNESS  
COMMITTEE**

• Canada's people-powered, citizen-funded wilderness preservation group •

# A Fitting Legacy

The Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund honours the legacy of one of BC's leading environmental heroes who passed away in June 2017. This fund ensures that Gwen Barlee's vision of widespread and lasting nature protection and wildlife defence prevails.

Born in BC's Okanagan Valley in 1963, Gwen developed a keen appreciation for the natural world around her as she explored the region with her mother, father and two sisters.

In 2001, Gwen joined the Wilderness Committee team. She became the organization's National Policy Director and helped guide the organization and its community of allies through many hard-fought environmental campaigns for more than 15 years.



Photo of Gwen (Diane Barlee).



Photo: Vancouver Island marmot (Jared Hobbs).

## Endangered species

Soon after she joined the Wilderness Committee, Gwen travelled across the country to advocate for federal endangered species legislation. It was enacted the following year. She then monitored the implementation and enforcement of that legislation on the ground. In this work, Gwen helped launch many courtroom battles on behalf of endangered wildlife.

## Parks defence

Gwen defended BC parks from industrial development and government funding cuts. She successfully argued that BC parks should not have entrance fees. She wanted all British Columbians — no matter their income level — to have access to parks.



Photo: Garibaldi Provincial Park (Michael Wheatley).



## Wild rivers

In the mid-2000s when corporations proposed BC's wildest rivers be diverted and dammed with costly, irresponsible private power projects, Gwen joined forces with community groups and citizens to stop the BC government's "ruin-of-river" policies. Gwen helped save beautiful BC river systems like the Pitt, Glacier, Howser and Bute Inlet.



**Photo:** Boulder Creek near Upper Lillooet Valley (Gwen Barlee).



**Photo:** Garry oak ecosystem (Michael Wheatley).

## Freedom of Information

Gwen's policy work led her to become a tenacious expert on Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. This became her trademark tactic. Gwen created persuasive federal and provincial campaigns based on data gleaned from the government's own files.

## Help us continue her legacy

Gwen Barlee's passionate, positive impact on environmental preservation across Canada is undeniable. The Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund will continue her work: to fight the destruction of at-risk species habitat, defend and expand our parks systems, fight private power schemes on our wild rivers and train a new generation of environmental activists to conduct ground-breaking investigative research using FOIs.



**Photo:** Rusty patched bumble bee (Clay Bolt).

**Wild rivers, forests, meadows, all creatures big and small including western toads, mountain caribou, sage grouse, killer whales, spotted owls and bees — these were Gwen's passions.**

Through the Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund, her legacy will continue. Help us continue what Gwen started with your gift.



# Together, we will finish what Gwen Barlee started...



## **...research expeditions and mapping to defend spotted owl habitat against logging.**

In 2001, while exploring BC's Anderson Creek Valley, Gwen came face-to-face with a spotted owl — an amazing stroke of luck. Less than 50 owls remained at that time. She never forgot the chance encounter. Represented by Ecojustice, the Wilderness Committee launched several hard-fought court battles to save owl habitat from logging. Since then, thousands of hectares of owl habitat have been put off-limits to logging. But much more needs to be put aside for Canada's spotted owl to have a fair chance of survival.



**Photo:** Spotted owl (Francis-Xavier De Ruysds).

## **...legal battles to protect greater sage-grouse habitat from oil and gas development as the species begins to recover.**

For two years in a row, endangered greater sage-grouse populations in Alberta and Saskatchewan have been on the rise. There are at least 200 now in Canada. These promising numbers resulted from a court challenge in 2013 by the Wilderness Committee and allies, represented by Ecojustice. The federal government was required to step up protections after nearly 90 percent of the greater sage-grouse population died off between 1988 and 2006. We're seeing growth again, but now is not the time to relax. Some, like the City of Medicine Hat and local oil and gas companies support unfettered industrial expansion and would dearly like to see these protections rolled back.



**Photo:** Greater sage-grouse (Glen and Rebecca Grambo).

## **...mapping, legal challenges and intervention in a federal environmental assessment to push governments to protect at-risk species — from killer whales to bumble bees.**

With the help of her allies and represented by Ecojustice, Gwen battled the federal government in



**Photo:** Killer whales (John E. Marriot).



court for many species. She and her allies advocated for the protection of critical habitat for the southern resident killer whale in the Salish Sea — including the habitat of their essential food source, Chinook salmon. When neonicotinoid pesticide use led to massive bee kills, Gwen represented the bees to our federal senate and with our allies in court.



Photo: Grizzly bear (John E. Marriott).

With damaging projects like Kinder Morgan’s oil tanker terminal expansion project and the proposed expansion of Delta Port at Roberts Bank, BC threatening killer whale habitat, the time for action is now. We continue to advocate for the protection of these at-risk species.

**...from research expeditions to creative policy work, fighting to stop the loss of critical habitats with a strong, enforceable federal endangered species law.**

Where Gwen was, there was impact: in our halls of parliament, in the field where she photographed endangered wilderness habitats and species, and in the courts. Gwen could be found with a large, inflatable grizzly bear on the lawn of our nation’s parliament in Ottawa or with a 9-foot-long sockeye salmon at meetings with legislators. Getting federal legislation to protect species-at-risk was just her first step. For Gwen — and now, for all of us to continue — the work to ensure the federal government strengthens and enforces its own species-at-risk law is critical.

**...and defending species big and small in our provinces and territories.**

Gwen’s work to advocate for BC provincial species at risk legislation was never-ending. From children’s art shows to the award winning documentary *Toad People*, Gwen’s work increased awareness across the province about the urgent need for legislation. BC is one of few provinces without a stand-alone provincial endangered species law, but now we are closer than ever. If many of the species Gwen cared so passionately about are going to survive and thrive, we require strong provincial legislations across the country, including protection for critical habitat, paired with federal species legislation and concrete action plans. With your help, we’re going to keep a promise to Gwen to protect their lives.

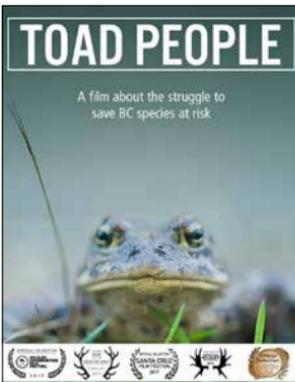


Photo: Toad People poster (WC files).



# BC's South Okanagan-Similkameen

region is home to an amazing variety of wild plants and animals. In fact, this region provides habitat to over one-third of the provinces species at risk. Gwen's love for species and for her home region meant she spent more than a decade working to see the forests, meadows, grasslands and mountains of this beloved region protected within a new national park reserve.

The dream of this park is not yet realized but the federal, provincial and First Nations governments have committed to this vision. **The Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund will see this national park become a reality** and the at-risk species in this area protected for decades to come.



Photos left to right: Gwen at Glacier Creek • Endangered species info booth • BC Parks petition roll out at BC legislature (WC files).

Photo background: McIntyre Bluff, South Okanagan (Gwen Barlee).

# The Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund

will support work Gwen Barlee championed with remarkable passion and progress. The Wilderness Committee and Gwen's network of colleagues invite you to join with them and do justice to Gwen's memory by ensuring the work she cared so deeply about continues.



**Photos left to right:** Speaking at Wild@Art show • Searching out the elusive American badger in the Okanagan (WC files).



# Gifts of passion for protection

We are standing in a moment of opportunity. Help us finish what Gwen started.

Your gift will help ensure:

- ◆ Stronger federal species at risk legislation
- ◆ Stand-alone endangered species legislation in British Columbia
- ◆ A new national park reserve in the South Okanagan-Similkameen
- ◆ A ban on harmful, bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides
- ◆ Government accountability through strategic Freedom of Information requests

Donate today: [WildernessCommittee.org/GBMF](http://WildernessCommittee.org/GBMF)

**Thanks to your gift, the Gwen Barlee Memorial Fund will ensure that when we need to put extra resources into her campaigns, we can.**



Or become a **Wilderness Guardian**.

Consider making an enduring gift of your own. Create your own fund today. You can honour a loved one or be remembered yourself as a champion for wild species and wilderness preservation.

Set up your fund and create an enduring gift that reflects YOUR vision and values. Or include the Wilderness Committee in your will or estate plans.

[WildernessCommittee.org/WildernessGuardians](http://WildernessCommittee.org/WildernessGuardians)



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Photo cover: Bridal Veil Falls Provincial Park (Gwen Barlee).

**VOL. 39, NO. 3, 2018**

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