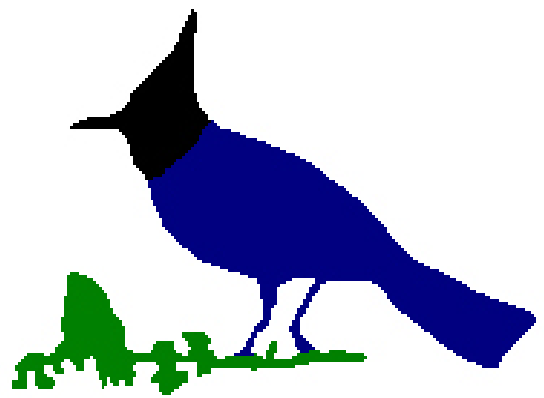


Nature Notes

Climate Change



With the Copenhagen Climate Conference taking place in Dec.09 and the doctored climate data scandal in Britain, climate change is a significant and relevant topic.

No one knows for sure how climate change will affect the Rocky Mountain Trench and the Kimberley Nature Park (KNP) but there are trends. The temperature in this area has warmed one degree over the past one hundred years and is forecast to warm another 2 or 3 degrees by 2050. Total precipitation has increased slightly but less in the form of snow. Over the next few years precipitation is expected to increase slightly in the winter and decrease in the summer. Plants and animals in the KNP will need to adapt to the changes.



Lodgepole pine tree infected by Mountain Pine Beetle

Photo by L Duncan

The most noticeable example of change is the dead and dying lodgepole pines caused by the mountain pine beetle. The beetle is flourishing because of warmer temperatures and this seems to have led to an increase in three toed woodpeckers that feed on the beetle.

The KNP is within Kimberley's interface fire hazard area of concern. Because of fire suppression over the past decades there has been a buildup of fuel in the park.

Balancing the values of a relatively undisturbed natural area against cost effective fuel reduction is a complex and challenging task. Members of the KNP Society actively participate in the fuel reduction planning process

If you are interested in any of these issues, consider joining the KNP to help with the climate change adaptation challenges that are likely to arise in the park.



Three-toed Woodpecker

Photo by K Goodwin

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy of this article or to learn more about Nature Park events.