

# Roads and Toads Workshop Offers Protection Strategies

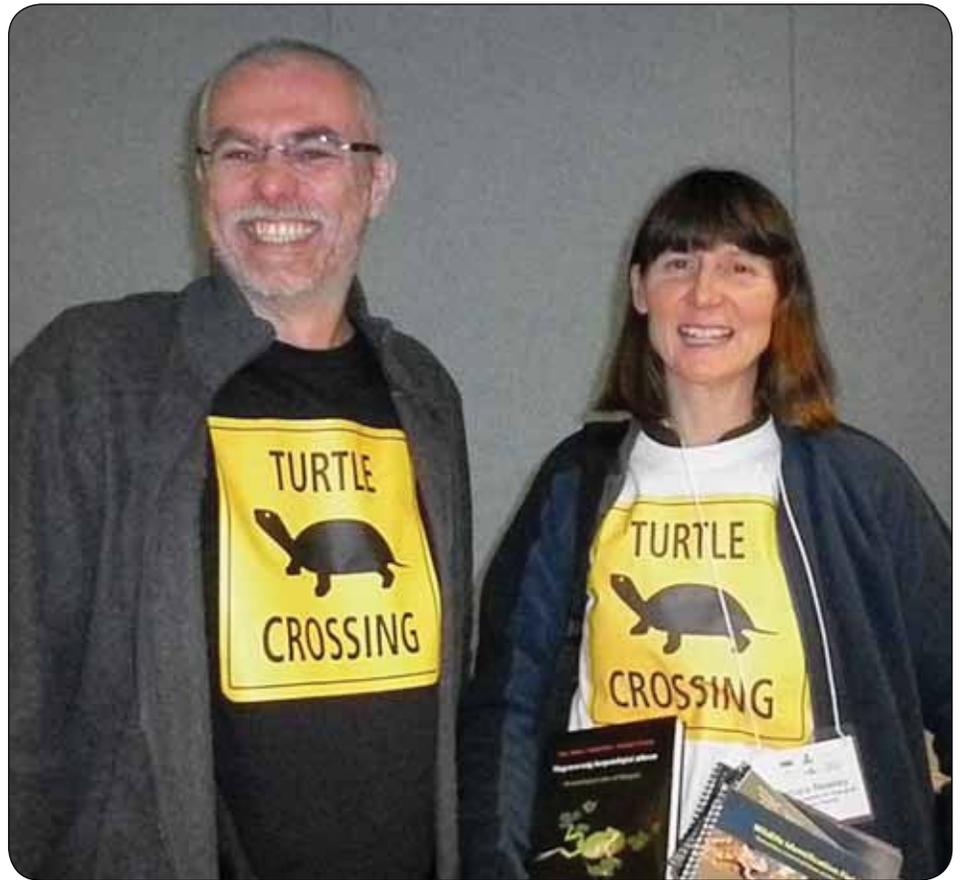
Submitted by Leonard Sielecki, Environmental Issues Analyst

As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, the ministry co-hosted the Herpetofauna and Roads Workshop, at the Vancouver Island University, in Nanaimo, from Feb. 22 to 23. The other co-hosts were the Ministry of Environment, B.C. Frogwatch, the northwest chapter of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, the Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sound and the Biology Department of Vancouver Island University.

The workshop was the brainchild of Elke Wind, E. Wind Consulting; Dr. Barb Beasley, Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds; and Dr. Purnima Govindarajulu, Environmental Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment. Elke, Barb and Purnima saw a growing need to bring scientists, environmental managers and engineers together to examine the potential impacts of transportation corridors on amphibians and reptiles and discuss approaches to mitigate them.

As the workshop's lead organizer, Elke arranged for a very impressive line-up of plenary speakers: Dr. Miklos Puky, a leading European amphibian expert from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Kari Gunson of Eco-Kare International, one of the top five finalists in the inaugural ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition, in 2010; and Dr. Bruce Kingsbury, the director of the Center for Reptile and Amphibian Conservation and Management at Indiana-Purdue University.

The workshop was well attended and the Vancouver Island University campus was a great venue for the event. More than 100 people participated, including representatives from municipal, provincial, state and federal natural resource and transportation agencies



Dr. Miklos Puky, an amphibian expert from the Hungarian Academy of Science and Dr. Barb Beasley, Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds.

in British Columbia and Washington State; universities across Canada and the U.S.; leading environmental non-government agencies; prominent local, national and international environmental consulting firms; and major resource industries and utilities. The workshop was well organized and extremely constructive. The presentations and group exercises were highly informative and gave a compelling overview of the plight of amphibians and reptiles and provided approaches and strategies for protecting these creatures. Despite an unexpected blizzard, the atmosphere at the workshop was warm and inviting. The social events and poster presentations provided an excellent opportunity for participants from all fields and interests to meet and speak with leading researchers in an informal setting.

In addition to supporting the workshop, the ministry's senior headquarters and regional environmental staff also participated. A/Chief Environmental Officer Greg Czernick, Southern Interior Region Environmental Services Manager Brent Persello, and Northern Region Environmental Services Manager Daryl Nolan shared their knowledge and experience with the workshop participants. Together they provided perspectives on the issues and solutions to challenges faced by the ministry, and transportation agencies, globally. Brent gave a comprehensive presentation on the ministry's ongoing efforts to protect amphibians and reptiles on Highway 97, near Osoyoos. The workshop was a great opportunity to showcase the ministry's work and its commitment to the environment. ♦

