

The Centennial Year of the CO Service, was featured in the 2005/2006 Freshwater Fishing Synopsis

2005 - The Centennial Year of the Conservation Officer Service

July 1st, 2005, is the 100th Anniversary of the appointment of the first **Provincial Game and Forest Warden**, Arthur Bryan Williams. For the first few years he had no budget and his staff consisted only of volunteer Deputies. By 1918 there were thirty-three paid Deputies with many more honorary Deputies located around the Province.

In 1918 the Provincial Police assumed administration of the *Game Act*, while an appointed Game Commissioner made decisions on seasons and regulations. Mr. Williams and all but three of the former deputies were discharged.

On June 1, 1929, the B.C. Game Department was re-established, again headed by A. Bryan Williams as Game Commissioner. Forty-five members of the Provincial Police formed the nucleus of the Game Department, while several of the former Deputy Game Wardens were re-hired.

In 1934, a new Game Commission, made up of A.G. Bolton, James Cunningham and Frank Butler, replaced Williams. When the Game Department became the Fish and Game Branch of the Department of Recreation and Conservation in 1957, Mr. Butler became its Director. Game Wardens were renamed Conservation Officers in

1961.

Charles E. Estlin was appointed as the first Chief Conservation Officer in 1962 and the Fish and Game Branch became the Fish and Wildlife Branch in 1966.

In 1980, Conservation Officers formed their own branch within the new Ministry of Environment, separate from Fish and Wildlife. This branch became the field enforcement and public safety arm of the Ministry.

In 2002 the Conservation Officer Service and the position of Chief Conservation Officer, who has complete supervision over the Service, were officially created in legislation. Conservation Officers now wear their own unique uniform, have their own coat of arms and operate distinctively marked patrol vehicles. There are currently just over 120 COs within the Service in 44 locations province-wide.

For more information on the history of the Conservation Officer Service, please go to <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/cos>



Game Wardens Neil Cameron and Len Washburn in Fernie, 1932