



www.centralvalleynaturalists.org

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m. in the Seniors' Resource Centre Michael Collins Room 2478 McCallum Road, Abbotsford

Mailing address: P.O. Box 612 Abbotsford, BC V2S 6R7 Email: haroos@shaw.ca

NEWSLETTER

January 2006

*“To know nature
and to
keep it worth knowing”*

The objectives of the Central Valley Naturalists

- *To enjoy and interpret natural history*
- *To promote an understanding and an appreciation of natural ecosystems*
- *To promote the concept of stewardship of natural resources*
- *To participate as naturalists in public consultations related to questions of environment and development in the Fraser Valley*

CVN membership!!

Meeting Schedule

January 11, 2006

Environmental consultant and avid



field naturalist, **Dennis Knopp**, will present a slide talk on his work with local endangered

species featuring **“the natural history of the Oregon Spotted Frog”** and other rare species that share its habitat.

February 8, 2006

(Speaker to be determined)

Some suggestions for topics were:

- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Roosevelt Elk
- Harrison Knob diggings
- ground water concerns
- native (Sto:lo) use of herbs
- inter-tidal flora and fauna
- forestry practices in BC



*Don't forget to
renew your 2006*

If you have any suggestions for a topic or speaker, please contact Wendy DaDalt at 604-856-2575 or Kathy Wilkinson at 604-854-3203



N.B. PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE LEADERS A DAY BEFORE THE FIELDTRIP OR NATURE WALK OF YOUR INTENT.

This will greatly help the leaders in planning and carpooling, etc.

Nature Walks

NATURE WALKS are easy walking and about one hour in duration. We will explore the local trails and greenways in Abbotsford and Mission. Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge of plants, birds, geology and history, etc. on all designated walk days, which are scheduled for the **4th Friday** of the month.

Jean Sawatzky (604-854-8238) and Alice Roos (604-853-4283) are the contacts for the nature walks.

January 27 - Friday **Clayburn Creek**

Meet at the Seniors' Resource Centre at 9:30 am

February 24 - Friday **McDonald Park**

Meet at the Seniors' Resource Centre at 9:30 am

March 24 - Friday



Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve

Meet at the Seniors' Resource Centre at 9:30 am

April 28 - Friday **Downes Bowl**

Meet at the Seniors' Resource Centre at 9:30 am

May 18 – Thursday (note change of day) **Downes Bowl/Maclure Escarpment**

We will host a group from the Richmond Nature Park.

Meet at the entrance to the fairgrounds on Haida Drive at 11 am

Field Trips

The **FIELD TRIPS** could be further away, more strenuous, and of 2 to 4 hours in duration. Please remember that all participation in field trips is at your own risk. For details on any of these Field Trips and carpooling, contact Jacqui Reznick at 604-557-1828

January 14 – Saturday **Boundary Bay**



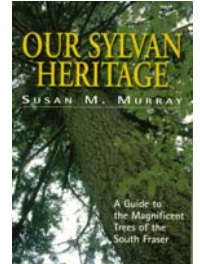
We hope to see the snowy owl and other wintering birds. Meet at the parking lot on 72nd and the dyke at 10.00 AM.

Take Hwy 10 and access Boundary Bay by going south on 72nd from Ladner Trunk Road (Hwy 10) Bring a lunch

Feb 18 – Saturday

Birding at Mill Lake and Heritage Trees.

Together with the Langley Field Naturalists we will look for wintering birds and look at the Heritage trees mentioned in Susan Murray's book "Our Sylvan Heritage". Meet at 9.45 am in the north parking lot off Mill Lake Road behind Sevenoaks. Bring snacks



March 11 – Saturday

West Creek Wetlands – 10:00 am

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Stanley Park Mushroom walk **October 16**

Eleven CVN members together with thirty five from the Stanley Park ecological Society embarked on a journey with the guidance of Terry Taylor. Terry Taylor is a botanist who has special interest in mycology and donates much of his time educating, not only BC Naturalists but many other groups. He is very active with the Vancouver Mycological Society.

It was a rainy day...one could say a typical October day for Vancouver. Mushrooms not only need moisture but a wooded area. Stanley



Park is the perfect setting for mushrooms. The walk was not long, for the vicinity of the Nature House had a varied array of mushrooms and their diverse function.

Mushrooms are very important in our ecological balance. Some mushrooms break down organic matter, that is, they help in the rotting process, otherwise we would never get rid of plant material. Other mushrooms are essential in the growth of trees. There is no way I could tell you all about mushrooms but one mushroom left me thinking... the 'honey' mushroom. This mushroom attacks healthy trees and kills it. The same mushroom will then move to the next tree. Should we stop this and find a way to save the tree or is this a way for nature to decide????

November 19 ***Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Fest***



Four of us arrived at Leq'a:mel First Nations Hall and took time to admire the location and the many environmental and educational displays. The First Nations cuisine was superb. There were many CVN members who also attended the fest.

Stephen Howard's displays and his live Eagle and Gerry Powers' displays provided a very powerful message for the uninitiated in ***"to know nature and to keep it worth knowing"***. There were many more displays and eleven sites to visit from Mission to Harrison. A rehabilitated Eagle was released at Kilby Park
Terry Taylor gave a talk on "Secrets of the West Coast Temperate Rainforest Ecology". We then went to Eaglepoint Community Park for eagle viewing. It was a meandering walk that led you to different points along the Harrison River. We saw hundreds of eagles circling above in the blue sky and salmon in the Harrison River at the end of their life cycle. We must return and include the other sites next year.

Thanks! to the many volunteers from our club who designed the displays and others for manning the displays.

A special thank you goes to: Gerry Powers, Steve Howard, Margaret and Dick Bunbury, Jean Sawatzky, Jacqui Reznick, Herman and Joyce Venema and Hank and Alice Roos.

Aldergrove Lake Regional Park Pepin Brook Trail.

On Friday, November 25, four hardy females were determined that rain and grey skies would not hinder a morning nature walk at Aldergrove Lake Regional Park. We were dressed for the weather. We carpoled and parked at the dog off-leash area at the corner of 8th Avenue and Lefevre Road and began our walk along the Pepin Brook Trail. We walked through meadows, forests, up hills, down hills, and over bridges.

What did we see? I believe most of the birds were in hiding. But we did see a few birds: downy wood pecker, hairy wood pecker, winter wren, song sparrow, black-capped chickadee and a red-tailed hawk.

How can I describe the serenity when we stopped to look and listen? Many times when we stopped I wished I had a camera with me. The scenery before us would look good on any calendar.

Returning to Abbotsford we stopped at Tim Horton's for refreshments.

Joanne Ravensbergen

Maclure Escarpment Ponderosa Pond

On Friday 23rd December, four members of CV Naturalists went for a most pleasant and rewarding walk on the Maclure Escarpment, one of the many steep wooded slopes on glacial moraine, which are so characteristic of the Abbotsford landscape. The weather was mostly cloudy bright. We parked at Ellwood Park, and for about two hours we followed walkways and trails along Fishtrap Creek, and then along the escarpment, past Maclure Pond, and then by Ponderosa Pond, on top of the high ground, and down Southern Trail.

There were no flowers, but the green leaves of land cress (which Jean later picked to put in her salad that evening), buttercups and Herb Robert - an adventive weed geranium, were clearly doing well. These woods have Oregon grape but no salal. Sword fern, an indicator species for high soil quality, is common. Small ferns, (liquorice fern) grow amazingly high up on the mossy trunks of broad-leafed



maples. Two plants of tansy ragwort, a noxious weed, were yanked out. A tip for plant people, get to know places when the plants are in full growth or flowering, so that later you can see a fragment of green leaf and say, "Of course that's obviously *****."

There were quite a number of red alder trees which had been cut beside the trail. Some showed sign of core rot. Perhaps they had been cut because of concerns about safety, but in other cases there was no obvious reason for the removal of these trees.

People sometimes say "see a park before it has been 'improved' too much".

I sometimes think there must be park caretakers who keep discussing what can be chopped next.

There were also quite a few dead small Douglas firs, about three or four feet tall. They may have been planted just before a spell of dry weather. Follow-up is needed for tree planting. These trees seem to have been planted too near the path, and of too large a size to take well.

We saw fresh deer tracks, and then we saw two black-tailed deer, which moved away, but in no great rush.

We saw one grey squirrel, a black one.

At Ponderosa Pond, which is now surrounded by houses, there was the reward of a most humorous sight. A female duck had caught a fish about four inches long. It was lying across between the two sides of her bill. She circled around, keeping the fish at some distance from her not too aggressive mate. She shook it back and forwards.

Finally, she somehow positioned it facing down her throat, almost jumped out of the pond,

three times, smacking down on to the water, and jolting the fish down inside her. When I told this anecdote to Audrey Mobley, she was very pleased, because it showed that the former Streamkeepers' efforts to put fish into ponds have had some success.

The birds we saw were:

Mallard, Ring-necked duck
Bufflehead, Gadwall
American coot, Common merganser
Hooded merganser, America widgeon
Black-capped chickadee, Juncos
Golden-crowned kinglets, Song sparrow
Spotted towhee, Winter wren,
Bewick's wren, Crows
Steller's jay, Red-tailed hawk
Northern flicker, Gulls

We picked up some plastic and paper garbage, contributing to the upkeep of the place. *Next time, more plastic bags.*

A very worthwhile small trip.

Submitted by Lorna Allan

**Most snowfall:
Corner Brook, Nfld.,
With an average annual
snowfall of 414
centimetres**



approaches that would be taken, such as producing brochures, a website, workshops,

FBCN NEWS



Due to a decline in participation by youth in provincial parks, B.C. Parks, in conjunction with the BC Conservation Foundation and the BC Conservation Corps has developed **Project GO (for Get Outdoors!) to raise awareness of parks and parks services** available on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland and encourage recreational use and fitness. Accordingly, two people hired under this initiative spoke to the recent FBCN Lower Mainland regional meeting to discuss

targeting community centres, Aboriginal youth etc.

In May 2006 the FBCN will award 2 **scholarships** of \$1000.00 each in memory of Rene Savenye of the White Rock/Surrey Naturalists. These scholarships are available to members of the FBCN or daughters, sons or spouses of members who are registered at an accredited institution of higher learning in BC in a program which will lead to a degree in a discipline which contributes to an awareness,

appreciation and understanding of our natural environment. The deadline for applications is April 14, 2006. For further details please see the Winter issue of BC Naturalist, the FBCN website www.naturalists.bc.ca or the FBCN office at fbcn@telus.net.

The FBCN is currently undertaking strategic planning for the future. Watch for a **member questionnaire** in the March issue of BC Naturalist, and online. Please fill out the questionnaire as this will help us determine the priorities and future course of the Federation.

The FBCN will again partner with the B.C. Ministry of the Environment and Parks Facility Operators to provide **nature interpretation** in Provincial Parks this summer. It is expected that 10-12 young people will be hired under this program. On the conservation front, Bev Ramey, Anne Murray, Jeremy McCall and others are reviewing plans for Roosevelt elk re-introduction into the Pitt River, upper Stave River and Squamish River areas; the plans for expansion of the Deltaport, the government

options for at risk mountain caribou and regulation of off-road vehicles and invasive species.

Birds on the Bay will be running again from January to May and will include such events as birding by kayak, night prowls for owls, raptors revealed and many others. We hope that some of the avid birders and interested beginners will support this event. Please see the schedule of events at www.birdsonthebay.ca.

The spring **Annual General Meeting** and FBCN Members weekend will be held in **Comox/Courtenay May 4th –7th**. It will focus on the theme of **"Sustaining the Land of Plenty"** and will include field trips with other member clubs on Vancouver Island and Dr. Nancy Turner, well-known ethno botanist and author from University of Victoria, as the evening banquet guest speaker. Details will be in upcoming issues of BC Naturalist.

CLUB NEWS

History of the Central Valley Naturalists

To mark the **13th anniversary** of our club and the beginning of a new winter season of activities it is appropriate to review, in brief, the history of our club, and the changing public perception of the significance of environmental issues in our region.

In the early 1990s there were few community organizations in Abbotsford that took an interest in the natural environment and none that had adopted a strong advocacy role. The range of environmental issues and their impact on the health and well-being of the community was poorly understood. Environmentalists were at one point referred to as "environmental terrorists" solidly opposed to any development.

Nevertheless, in 1990 the District of Matsqui hired Peter Andzans and tasked him to draft an environmental policy. The "State of the Environment Report and Environmental Policy"



was only one of four in existence at the time. The SOER was published and public forums were organized. At one of these Peter met Johanna Saaltink. Encouraged by Peter, Johanna Saaltink and a loyal group of like-minded friends formed the Central Valley Naturalists. The Club was given an office in City Hall. But all funding for environmental projects in those days had to come from Trust Funds or Corporate Donors and not from the City.

But public interest started to increase. Our members participated in the preparation of proposals for the Protected Area Strategy. The group had a strong birder component and bird lists were prepared. At about the same time Sylvia Pincott and one of the city's environmental interns set up the Backyard Habitat Program. The Naturalists gave strong support to this effort that became an outstanding success and became Naturescape B.C.



In 1995 Matsqui and Abbotsford amalgamated. Peter Andzans remained Environmental Manager, but
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the Council of the new City was not ready yet to adopt an environmental stewardship role. Members of the club participated in public consultations for an OCP and prepared an ambitious proposal for the execution of a biophysical inventory. But at this point in time the overriding concern for the survival of the salmon caused all funding by DFO and donor organizations to be channelled into projects designed to protect or to restore Salmon Habitat. The funds were used to support Stream Enhancement Societies and Stream Keeper groups established by volunteer groups. This approach to management of fish habitats was not very satisfactory. DFO funding discontinued several years later and volunteer activities ceased except in the municipalities who had supported the work. Abbotsford was not one of them.

Meanwhile Community Colleges and Universities were educating a whole new generation of young people in the theory and practice of environmental management. These students have now entered the job market. At the same time, a dramatic increase in public support for environmental issues occurred. In particular the prolonged fight to stop the construction of the SE2 power plant in Washington State did a lot to boost the interest of concerned citizens and politicians in environmental issues.

It became abundantly clear that the City needed to protect itself from the undesirable interventions and proposed private effects of by Government developments by interests. Accordingly the City of Abbotsford adopted a "Charter of Sustainability" and has recently hired suitably qualified professional staff to work with other city departments under the general supervision of Peter Andzans to handle environmental issues, to cooperate with



professional staff of other levels of Government, and work with volunteer organizations such as CVN.

This will have a beneficial effect on our relationship with the City and our effectiveness as an advocacy agency. While we shall continue to monitor the actions of council affecting the environment, we hope that through our work with competent City staff, communications will greatly improve and it is hoped that our relationship will become one of mutual trust and respect. For a start, four CVN members were invited to take part in a newly formed Environmental Advisory Committee

Henk Saaltink

McKee Peak

The consultant's report containing recommendations for development of McKee Peak is now available online at the City's website, www.abbotsford.ca. CD-ROM's and hard copies are also available at \$20.00 and \$30.00 respectively. The report will be discussed by Executive Committee of Council in January. The McKee Peak area is home to an amazing diversity of wildlife, including provincially and nationally rare species and it is hoped that many of our members will take an interest and voice their opinions at the upcoming meeting.

Coldest day of any year:
Snag, Yukon, at -63 C
recorded Feb 3, 1947

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Membership Fees - Single \$25, Family \$30 which are due January 1 each year.
Membership provides the following benefits: 5 CVN newsletters per annum, automatic membership in the Federation of B.C. Naturalists, subscription to "The B.C. Naturalist" (4 issues per year)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Particular nature interests? (optional) _____

Expertise which could benefit the CVN. (optional) _____

Please mail to Central Valley Naturalists, P.O. Box 612, Abbotsford, BC V2S 6R7, or give to Jacqie at the hospitality desk at the monthly meeting. Membership fees are due January 1st each y year.

NEWSLETTER - the newsletter is published in September, November, January, March and May. Any news items and interesting articles can be sent to Alice Roos at haroos@shaw.ca or 604-853-4283

E-MAIL ADDRESSES In order to keep our costs down; we are planning to e-mail the newsletter to those that have an email address. Please provide your e-mail address to either Jacqie Reznick or Alice Roos. For those that cannot be reached by e-mail, copies will be available at the monthly meeting.

CVN EXECUTIVE

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