



THE OSPREY

**Newsletter of the
West Kootenay Naturalists' Association**

#2-809 Mill St, Nelson BC V1L 4S8

vol 47, no 1

March through June, 2020



Copper Beech Tree (see trip report)

GENERAL MEETINGS

New schedule is as follows: Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month, 7:00 pm, *except as noted*. Five meetings per year and the annual Picnic in June. September, January and March meetings at the Castlegar Community Complex, November potluck and meeting at Genelle Hall, April potluck and AGM at Genelle Hall. Potlucks start at 4:45 pm when doors open for setup. Meal begins at 5:30 pm. Program begins at 6:45 pm. Changes may be mentioned at meetings, via Google group and/or in your local newspaper. Ann Wood has generously volunteered to handle the arduous task of packing the supplies and making the coffee and tea. THE FOREGOING ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. If you want to bring cookies, squares, etc, please do! For June annual picnic venue, see Field Trip Schedule. No meetings in October, December, February, May, July, August, or December. "The Osprey" is emailed on the Friday preceding the September and January meetings, and the week after the May meeting to show the current year's Officers.

WKNA OFFICERS 2019-2020

ELECTED:

PRESIDENT	Peter Wood	250-359-7107 annpeterwood@gmail.com
VICE-PRESIDENT	vacant	
PAST PRESIDENT	Brent Hancock	250-304-6840
RECORDING SECRETARY	Elaine Jackman	packrat_j@hotmail.com
TREASURER	Paula Neilson	silver.lady33@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP REGISTRAR	Janis Gilbert	janisg522@gmail.com

APPOINTED:

ARCHIVIST	vacant	
BC NATURE DIRECTOR (WKNA)	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633 snowdance@shaw.ca
FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR	Diane White	250-825-4178 L8ddi@shaw.ca
PRESENTATION COORDINATOR/ FACILITY BOOKING	vacant	
WEB-PRESENCE DESIGNER/ CO-ORDINATOR	Tarah Reesor	tarah.reesor@gmail.com
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	PENDING	

SECTION CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:

BIRDING	Ed Beynon	250-365-7806
ENERGY & CONSERVATION, & WKNA DIRECTOR TO BC NATURE	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633 snowdance@shaw.ca
BIRD COUNTS: Bird Studies Canada WKNA, Christmas and Summer Bluebird Box Monitor Coordinator	vacant vacant Susan Spiller	250-921-5122 sspiller1977@gmail.com
GOOGLE GROUP ADMINISTRATOR	Tarah Reesor	terra.reesor@gmail.com

FIELD TRIPS

**Contact the FIELD TRIP DIRECTOR (see Page 2)
for information on trips and meetings.**

If you do not have email, contact the FTD for hard copy updates.

Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is May 13, 2020

Material accepted by the Publisher any time up to this date.

We reserve the right to edit for space, clarity, spelling and syntax.

Major changes will be discussed with the contributor.

****JUST A REMINDER ****

1. **Common courtesy and common sense** dictates that you inform the contact person to confirm your attendance at an event on the program, AND THAT YOU CONTACT TO CANCEL if you later find that you cannot attend. Nothing is written in stone and changes may have to be made from time to time, due to weather conditions or personal reasons. We would not want you to miss out on a single chance to enjoy our environment! **Don't wait until the last minute** to contact if you are interested in any of our events.....leader may have already left, especially if camping or long distances are involved.
2. **The leader of an outing is responsible for:**
 - ✓ Getting the appropriate waiver form signed by every person attending. *There are TWO waivers – one for all attendees and one for guests (one-day membership + \$1). Print/photocopy the guest waiver beforehand and keep extra copies just in case. Forward member waiver/sign-out sheets to Diane White, and day membership forms and accompanying dollars to Paula Neilson, immediately.*
 - ✓ Making sure that no one is left behind with car trouble at the parking area, especially in winter.
 - ✓ Arranging to have the trip report forwarded to the Editor. The leader may delegate this, of course. The writer also has the obligation to get the report submitted in time.
3. Make it a policy with the entire group to keep the person behind you in sight. If your follower on the trail is lagging. Slow your pace to keep that person in sight. If everyone in the group continually checks to make sure they can see the person behind them, it is impossible for anyone to get into serious trouble. If you split into groups, do not allow any one person to 'take off' by him/herself.
4. **NO PETS** are allowed on any of our outings.

Do you have any suggestions for outings, speakers, projects, improvements to the Club? Contact a member of the Executive!

TRIP REPORTS

Saturday, November 9, 2019:

Busk Mansion/Kokanee Creek Park -- Eight Naturalists and two guests had a lovely autumn walk up Kokanee Creek Trail to the viewing platform. From there we walked over to Kokanee Glacier Road to the trail to the old Busk Mansion. We enjoyed the magnificent old copper beech tree with all the initials carved into it and the old rope marks from an old swing; several of us stated it was our favorite tree! The lovely old oak tree was a beautiful sight on our way to the old cement pool. Two members tried the "whisper test" in the pool and we admired the yew tree beside the pool. We carried on back to the trail and came out to the beach trail in the park. We enjoyed walking along the beach and then followed the trail back to the cars. Some dippers were spotted along with some mallards on the creek by the lake. We had our lunch in the hiker/biker picnic area. The day was a good one!

Diane White

Saturday, November 23, 2019:

Merry Creek hike -- The weather forecast wasn't great, minus 1 degree Celsius and up to 4 cm of snow. Six of the thirteen people who had signed up for the hike cancelled which left seven of us on the hike. A slight skiff of snow was on the road but it wasn't at all slippery. After parking we started off and turned right at the first junction. While we were on this part of the trail we observed the large Vaux's Swift nest boxes which had been mounted about 30 feet up on the trunks of large old growth trees. These boxes were placed there about 10 years ago. We have heard that some swifts have nested in them. A little further along we took the trail to the left which led us up to a fenced viewpoint on a cliff overlooking some of the Merry Creek valley. From there we proceeded north around the hill and up to the highest part of this trail where we had a foggy view looking towards the Columbia-Kootenay Confluence, and the Ootischenia area. Later we stopped to see the log cabin that was partially built over 25 years ago. Some light snowflakes drifted down on us at this point and the forest was beautiful. The wildlife noted were several red squirrels, a flicker and a few black-capped chickadees. Thanks to the brave souls who came on this hike. First photo by Ed Beynon, the rest by Kathie Robertson.

Hazel and Ed Beynon



Saturday, November 30, 2019:

Swan Song -- Although usually on the last day of November we have snow, this year instead of a ski to see the swans we hiked the Slokan Valley Rail Trail to see the annual swan migration. Trumpeter Swans are North America's largest waterfowl. They eat arrow grass, sedge and bulrush roots. Feeding swans use their feet to loosen roots and rhizomes, then retrieve them with their strong black beaks and long slender necks. Over 60 Trumpeter Swans and closely related Tundra Swans visit the Slokan River from November through March. We gave up counting after 100 were spotted today. Ten WKN hikers and one guest braved the bitter wind and cold weather to walk the trail, stopping constantly to admire these beautiful birds. Several varieties of ducks including mallards and buffleheads as well as Canada geese seem to swim alongside the swans making the river a haven for bird watchers. We also admired the first nation pit houses, which date back 3000 years according to archaeological excavations. The swans are graceful swimmers and seem to be chatting among themselves steadily. The day warmed up and we enjoyed our lunch on and around the "big bench" before heading back. Thanks to all who joined us today. Photos by Diane White.

Diane White



Sunday, December 15, 2019:

It was a mostly sunny -5 degree day at Strawberry Pass. We enjoyed a snowshoe to Chimo Cabin, the first snowshoe this year for all of us. Everyone agreed it was a good first trip of the season, to check equipment and muscles, as it was only 2 km each way. There were 8 naturalists and two guests, one of whom will soon be a member. Conditions were great and lots of other skiers, snowshoers, dogs and tobogganers were out as well. We spotted snowshoe hare tracks in abundance, so they enjoy the mountain trails as well. We shared the cabin with members of The Friends of the Rossland Range club who have done an amazing job of looking after the cabins and parking lot up there. They had a cozy fire going and kindly shared the small space with us. We are all looking forward to another season in the mountains!
Photos and report respectfully submitted by **Diane White**, Trip Coordinator



Darkwoods Conservation Area to Grow



The Nature Conservancy of Canada receives \$650,000 from Columbia Basin Trust

A large tract of protected lands stretches between Nelson and Creston, including areas managed by the Province of British Columbia and the Darkwoods Conservation Area, owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Yet one area within Darkwoods—the Next Creek watershed—remains unprotected. This is about to change, as NCC is one step closer to purchasing the land with \$650,000 in support from Columbia Basin Trust.

Once the purchase of the Next Creek area is complete, it will increase the overall size of Darkwoods by 14 per cent, to nearly 630 square kilometres. Combined with the other protected lands between Nelson and Creston, the network of conservation lands and protected areas will total about 1,100 square kilometres. Conserving large tracts of land with a wide variety of connected habitat types is beneficial for wildlife, as well as water quality, and has other ecological values. In 2008, the Trust and several other organizations helped NCC purchase the Darkwoods Conservation Area. This was the largest private land acquisition for conservation ever undertaken in Canada, and still is.

“Securing this land for present and future generations of Basin residents will protect its current ecosystems, help prevent further deterioration and introduce restoration and enhancement,” said Johnny Strilaeff, Columbia Basin Trust President and Chief Executive Officer. “This will have significant benefits for many species, including species of concern like whitebark pine, grizzly bear and wolverine.”

The Darkwoods expansion project is part of a \$25-million initiative to increase NCC’s conservation impact in the Canadian Rockies region. Recently the governments of Canada and BC announced a contribution of \$14.65 million to this initiative, which will support the acquisition of the Next Creek area in Darkwoods. NCC is actively fundraising to fulfill its goal and complete the expansion of Darkwoods.

“Conserving the Next Creek watershed and expanding Darkwoods represents the fulfillment of a conservation vision that started over a decade ago,” said Nancy Newhouse, BC Regional Vice President, Nature Conservancy of Canada. “We are grateful for the continued support of Columbia Basin Trust. Their clear commitment to conservation has helped to make a real, on-the-ground difference to the people, wildlife and ecosystems of the Columbia Basin region.”



Since 1998, the Trust has helped land trusts secure over 1,000 square kilometres (105,892 hectares) of land for ecological conservation purposes. Through the Trust’s Environment Strategic Plan and Columbia Basin Management Plan Strategic Priorities, the Trust has committed to strengthening ecosystems. One of the ways the Trust is doing this is by continuing to contribute to land securement for conservation purposes, alongside its Environment Grants and Ecosystem Enhancement programs. Learn more about the Trust’s efforts to conserve and enhance the natural assets of the region at ourtrust.org/environment.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is the nation’s leading not-for-profit, private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to protect more than 1.1 million hectares (2.8 million acres), coast to coast, with more than one quarter of that area in British Columbia.

Jumbo Glacier Resort is dead. Jumbo Wild forever!



After nearly 30 years of fighting for grizzly bears, of fighting for Ktunaxa rights, and of fighting for wild places, Jumbo Glacier Resort is finally dead. Today is the day we can finally say: **Jumbo will stay wild.**

Now and forever, Qat'muk will be safe in a special Indigenous protected area, declared today by the Ktunaxa Nation with the support of our federal and provincial governments.

From the earliest marches through the streets of Invermere and protest camps in the Purcell Mountains, to the thousands who signed petitions and proudly placed Jumbo Wild Forever bumper stickers on their cars, we fought proudly alongside the Ktunaxa people to protect the home of the grizzly bear spirit. Now, this sacred place has been returned to the Ktunaxa people, to protect for grizzly bears and for all living things.

Together, Kootenay people, the Ktunaxa Nation and supporters around the world stopped a resort town from being built in the middle of the wild Purcell Mountains. Together, we fought for a home for grizzly bears over private profit—and we won!



What does an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area mean? No resort. A safe space for grizzly bears to roam. And a special place in the mountains that will stay wild.

The Qat'muk protected area will be much more than just the Jumbo Valley. Stretching over an anticipated 700 square kilometres of Purcell Mountain wilderness, the protected area will include glaciers, rocky peaks, rushing rivers, dense forests and deep mountain valleys spreading out in all directions from Jumbo. To the south, it will connect with the vast Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, giving grizzly bears and creatures of all kinds an expanse of connected habitat with few equals in Southern Canada.

As one of the only wildlife corridors left for grizzly bears to travel north-south between the United States and Canada, the protection of Qat'muk, a crucial part of the Purcell and Columbia Mountain habitat corridor, is great news for grizzlies across the continent. After years of legal and political wrangling that went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, the provincial and federal governments have finally taken steps towards reconciliation by recognizing Ktunaxa rights in Qat'muk.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to everyone who joined the fight to keep Jumbo Wild. **Thank you for everything you've done** to bring this day about: the petitions, the rallies, the donations, the bumper stickers, the photos, the songs, the hikes and so much more!

For everyone who kept up the struggle, year after year, kept coming to meetings, kept heading up into the mountains, thank you. For the generous donors and funders who gave to keep us going for nearly three decades and the foundations whose support for the Ktunaxa's vision made this day possible, thank you. For Patagonia and the film that brought Jumbo Wild to the world, thank you.

For everyone who spoke up for grizzly bears and for Ktunaxa rights, thank you. **For everyone, from all around the world, who stood up to proudly say "Keep Jumbo Wild", thank you! Jumbo Wild forever!**

John Bergenske
Conservation Director
Wildsight & Jumbo Wild