



THE OSPREY

Newsletter of the
West Kootenay Naturalists' Association

415 Olivia Crescent, Trail BC V1R 1A6

vol 45, no 3

November 2018 – February, 2019



Pink Clarkia, from public domain
See trip report for relevance

GENERAL MEETINGS

The new schedule is as follows: Five meetings per year and the Annual Picnic in June as before. September meeting in Nelson, November potluck in Genelle, January meeting in Castlegar, March meeting in Trail, and the AGM and potluck in **MAY** in Genelle. Meetings are held on the last Monday of each month, 7:00 pm, *except as noted*. Potlucks start at 4:45 pm when the doors open for setup. Meal begins at 5:30 pm. Changes may be mentioned at meetings, via Google group and/or in your local newspaper. Beverages will *not* be available beginning next season until someone steps forward to handle this task. THE FOREGOING ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. For June annual picnic venue, see appropriate Field Trip Schedule. No meetings in October, December, February, April, July, August, or December. "The Osprey" in hard copy is distributed at September and January meetings, and the week after the May meeting to show the current year's Officers. If we have your email address, you will receive it in that format. It's in colour, and the Club saves a great deal on postage.

WKNA OFFICERS 2018-19

ELECTED:

PRESIDENT	Peter Wood	250-359-7107 annpeterwood@gmail.com
VICE-PRESIDENT	vacant	
PAST PRESIDENT	Brent Hancock	250-304-6840
RECORDING SECRETARY	vacant	
TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP	Esther Brown	250-368-3663 estherbrown@shaw.ca

APPOINTED:

ARCHIVIST	Beth Truant	250-368-6325
BC NATURE DIRECTOR (WKNA)	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633
FIELD TRIP DIRECTOR	Pat West, Castlegar	250-304-2656 pwest27@telus.net
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
PRESENTATION COORDINATOR	vacant	
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com

SECTION CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:

BIRDING	Ed Beynon	250-365-7806
ENERGY & CONSERVATION	Joan Snyder	250-365-7633 snowdance@shaw.ca
BIRD COUNTS: Bird Studies Canada, WKNA, Christmas and Summer	Craig Sandvig	contact info n/a
INVASIVE PLANTS	vacant	
RIVERS DAY (Provincial)	vacant	
VIOLIN LAKE STAKEHOLDERS	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
GOOGLE GROUP ADMINISTRATOR	Arnold By	250-368-3068 awby@shaw.ca

FIELD TRIPS

**This schedule has been suspended indefinitely.
Contact a FIELD TRIP DIRECTOR (see Page 2)
for information on trips and meetings.**

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

***Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is January 16, 2019
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 ****

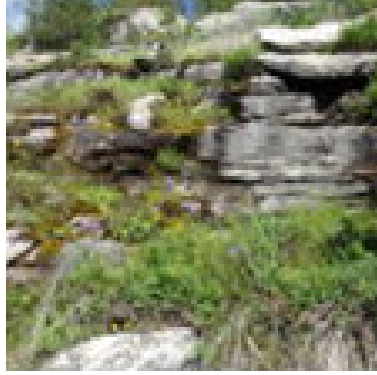
1. **Do you have any suggestions for new areas to visit?** Would you be willing to lead a hike? Please contact a Program Director with your great ideas. Thank you to all the contacts/leaders in all seasons. We learn so much from each of you.
2. **Common courtesy and common sense** dictates that you call the contact person to confirm your attendance at an event on the program, AND THAT YOU CALL TO CANCEL if you later find that you cannot attend. Lead time for the newsletter is as much as nine months between planning and execution. 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 phone if you are interested in any of our events.....leader may have already left, especially if camping or long distances are involved.
3. **The leader of an outing is responsible for:**
 - ✓ Finding a replacement contact/leader if you cannot be available for your planned outing. A replacement *leader* may choose to do the same outing, or they may suggest another.
 - ✓ 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 + \$1.00). Print/photocopy the guest waiver beforehand and keep extra copies just in case.* Forward these forms to Esther Brown, 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.
 - ✓ 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.

TRIP REPORTS

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Wildflower Identification Hike -- Eleven interested naturalists came out on this hike to the open rocky hillside just south of Fairview. The weather was good (not too hot). Most flowers were past their prime but some, such as the **pink clarkia**, were just starting to bloom. Over 25 species of blooming flowers were seen. We were so focused on the flowers that we forgot to take any photos of the participants. Photos on next page. [Photos 2 and 3 are blurry. Not caused by printing]

Hazel and Ed Beynon



Canada Day Hike to Blueberry Bluff -- July 1, 2018:

It was great weather for a hike, nice and cool. Seven WKNats hiked up a trail that had recently been cleared of brush and winter debris by Hazel and Ed. The first part of the trail was easy going and the upper part was more challenging but everyone easily made it to the top. On the way up we took a short side trip for a view overlooking Castlegar and vicinity from the top of a vertical cliff. (The first photo was taken at this location.) At the top of Blueberry Bluff we celebrated Canada Day and then had lunch. From this location we could just see Blueberry Creek far below us and had a good view of the Columbia River valley to the south of us. The hike was perfectly timed. Just as we got back to our cars rain started to pour down.

Photos and report by Hazel and Ed Beynon



Teck Resources pegged with \$8 million fine for toxic smelter pollution of Columbia River

U.S. judge rules it is 'inconceivable' company did not know its Trail, B.C. lead and zinc smelter — one of the largest in the world — was contaminating transboundary waters destined for Washington state

From Yellowstone to Yukon newsletter, Judith Lavoie, Sep 21, 2018:

Slag from a giant lead and zinc smelter in Trail B.C. has polluted Washington State waterways for so long that part of the shoreline has turned black and, after years of legal wrangles, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation are now celebrating a U.S. federal appeals court ruling that Teck Cominco Metals is responsible and owes the tribes millions of dollars.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld an \$8.25 million judgement made by a lower court that found Teck Metals, a subsidiary of Vancouver-based Teck Resources, was responsible for decades of toxic smelter waste that flowed down the Columbia River into Lake Roosevelt, a reservoir formed by the Grand Coulee Dam. The court determined that the company owes the Colville Tribes for its legal costs and the cost of investigating the pollution.

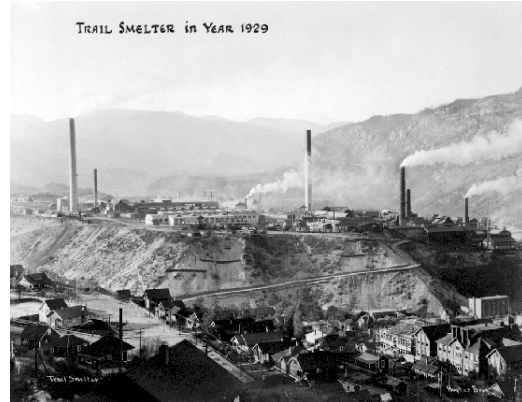
The ruling says that, between 1930 and 1995, Teck discharged about 400 tons of slag daily — an estimated 9.97 million tons in total — directly into the Columbia River. "These solid and liquid wastes contained roughly 400,000 tons of the heavy metals arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc, in addition to lesser amounts of other hazardous substances," it says. The Teck smelter is believed to be the world's largest lead and zinc smelter and the Tribes estimate that about 240 kilometres of the river have been affected by slag or heavy metals.

Teck Resources was found guilty of dumping 9.97 million tons of contaminated waste into the Columbia River, a transboundary river that runs from British Columbia to Washington State. Over the course of legal actions brought against Teck — which extend back to 1999 — the company has argued that the courts lacked jurisdiction over the company, that many other industrial operations contributed to the pollution and that the company was not "purposefully" dumping waste into the river knowing it would cross the border into the U.S. — all arguments rejected by the court.

"It is inconceivable that Teck did not know that its waste was aimed at the state of Washington when Teck deposited it into the powerful Columbia River, just miles upstream of the border," Judge Ronald M. Gould wrote in the 55-page ruling. A study commissioned by the tribes found that the waste matched the Trail smelter's "isotopic and geochemical fingerprint."



Teck Resources' Trail smelter in the early 1900s.
Photo: Ecology Washington



Trail smelter, circa 1929. Photo: B.C. Gov't Archives

The Colville Tribes were joined by the State of Washington as co-plaintiffs in 2004, with both the Tribes and State arguing that Teck should be found liable under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Cleanup and Liability Act.

"This is a unique case, not only because a Canadian mining company has been found liable under U.S. law, but because an Indian Tribe and a state have joined forces to protect a shared, treasured resource — the Columbia River," said Colville Business Council Chairman Rodney Cawston. The ruling means that the polluter, not U.S. taxpayers, will pay the cost of remedial action, he said.

However, Cawston is cautious about the prospects of the long legal battle coming to an end and believes, that based on previous behaviour, Teck is likely to appeal. The company has 90 days to petition the U.S. Supreme Court for a hearing. "If they want to do the right thing, they will acknowledge all the damage and their responsibility to clean that up and work with the Tribe in honouring that settlement," Cawston said. "Facing the enormity of the decision I wouldn't be surprised if they file an appeal...as a corporation they are going to look for the most economically feasible way out of this and, if that means fighting us in court, well, up until this point, that's what they have chosen to do," he said.

Teck spokesman Chris Stannell said in an e-mailed statement to The Narwhal that the company is disappointed by the decision and is reviewing it with counsel. However, the decision will not affect Teck's ongoing work to identify potential risks in the Upper Columbia River associated with historical operations at the Trail facility, he said.

So far, Teck has invested more than \$85-million U.S. towards a study — under the oversight of the U.S Environmental Protection Agency — and if unacceptable risks are identified, they will be addressed, Stannell wrote. "Results to date are encouraging and the Upper Columbia River remains an important recreational destination, with excellent water quality and restrictions on fish consumption that compare favourably to other water bodies in Washington State," he said. "Since the late 1970s Teck has invested approximately \$1.5 billion to improve the operation's environmental performance. As a result, emissions to air and water have been reduced by over 95 per cent," Stannell wrote.

Teck stopped discharging slag in the Columbia River in 1995, but that does not mean the problem has gone away and more pollution constantly flows down the river from residual slag, Cawston said. "It will take years to do the cleanup, even if they start today. We are going to be living with this situation for a while," he said, describing it as a never-ending battle.

The pollution has affected fish habitat and water quality and heavy metals have been found in sturgeon which the Tribes are working to restore, Cawston said. "We want the aquatic land to be cleaned up. There's even an area called black sand beach that's basically an area where all the slag that is coming down the Columbia is being deposited. It's really black," he said.

The Tribes have been in the area for thousands of years and it is difficult to persuade people that they cannot fish and swim in the traditional areas, he said. "It's a huge issue to us. It's really hard to keep people away from those areas. Culturally and traditionally our people have used those waters since time immemorial." The Colville Tribes are made up of 12 bands whose territories cover much of northern Washington and extend into the Arrow Lakes region of B.C.

Canada Commits Historic \$1.3 Billion to Create New Protected Areas

The Trudeau government committed an unprecedented \$1.3 billion in Budget 2018 to protect land and water in Canada over the next five years. The funds will help Canada meet its target to protect 17 per cent of land and 10 per cent of oceans by 2020 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. "This is a very good news day for conservation in Canada," Alison Woodley, national conservation director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), told DeSmog Canada.

In addition to significant financial investments, the budget also outlines a new model for collaborative conservation efforts bringing Indigenous, provincial and territorial governments together. "For the first time the government is not only investing in federal action but also recognizing the importance of partnerships, recognizing Indigenous, provincial and territorial government's work to protect land and water," Woodley said.

Over the next five years the federal government will invest \$500 million in conservation partnerships and \$800 million to support the creation of new protected areas, increased park management, protection of species at risk and to establish a coordinated network of conservation areas with other governmental partners. "I think the great thing about this is we're not starting from scratch," Woodley said. "There are places across this country where Indigenous and other government have proposals underway to protect large landscapes." Protecting the celebrated Peel Watershed in the Yukon would be an easy win when it comes to protecting undisturbed wilderness, Woodley said.

Proposals for the South Okanagan Similkameen national park to protect rare and diminishing desert in British Columbia, plans to protect undeveloped land in the Rockies and the Indigenous-led Thaidene Nene conservation project in the traditional territory of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation could also represent big conservation wins, she added.

Conservation efforts are key to recovering Canada's species at risk, such as caribou and orca that have suffered critical habitat loss and degradation over the last several decades. "The number one reason that species across Canada and globally are in danger is because they're losing habitat," Woodley said. "Protected areas are a key tool, whether on land or in the ocean, for addressing species at risk."

Canada has been harshly criticized for failing to adequately protect its endangered species, especially through the creation of strict no-go zones that would protect critical habitat from industrial development and human activity. Aerin Jacob, conservation scientist with the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y), said today's investment in protected areas signals a change in tide.

"This type of vision shows the government is serious about protecting nature on the scale it needs to thrive," Jacob said. "Now the hard work lies ahead since we need different conservation approaches in different parts of Canada. This includes carefully planning where the new protected areas should be, based on intact wilderness, connectivity, species at risk and more."

Woodley said conservation creates cascading positive effects where protected areas benefit wildlife, nature-based tourism and allow people to enjoy the lifestyles that come with landscapes that aren't industrialized. "This funding can deliver a whole suite of benefits to Canadians from nature conservation, economic, social and health perspectives."