



THE OSPREY

Newsletter of the
West Kootenay Naturalists' Association

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

vol 46, no 3

November 2019 – February, 2020



LUPINES AT THE OXBOW

See trip report June 16 for relevance

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. Beverages will be available beginning next season! 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 2019-20

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	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
SUNSHINE COMMITTEE	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com

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
VIOLIN LAKE STAKEHOLDERS LIAISON	Margo Saunders	250-693-2229 penandpaddle@gmail.com
GOOGLE GROUP ADMINISTRATOR	Tarah Reesor	terra.reesor@gmail.com

FIELD TRIPS

**Contact FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR Diane White
for information on trips and meetings**

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!**

Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is January 15, 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.

Times Lives Priorities

I have belonged to the West Kootenay Naturalists' Association since 1996, and have been your newsletter editor since 1997. I have enjoyed putting together every issue over the last 23 years, have published many trip reports from many authors, and it has been my pleasure to interact with all of our members in all this time. The WKNA almost foundered in December of 2018, but with the assistance and ambition of some brand new members to fill important positions on the executive and committees, we are again flourishing. It would be a terrible tragedy if an organization started 43 years ago, "to know Nature and keep it worth knowing" were to be discontinued in our communities.

I will be leaving my position as newsletter editor after the second issue in 2020 (distributed in May 2020), and want the club to be able to have time to fill the position with someone who will always have the best interests of the club foremost in mind. As time goes on, our lives change and our priorities do the same. That is the reason for my leaving, and there is no way any feelings other than good ones to be expressed to everyone in this wonderful organization. Thanks to you all!

Respectfully submitted by Margo Saunders

TRIP REPORTS

Thursday, June 6, 2019:

Bird walk -- It was an iffy day for birding as rain was threatening and the bushes and grass were already very wet. Nevertheless seven undeterred members showed up and had a successful bird outing. At Selkirk College many birds were singing. Near the oxbow the most beautiful song was from the meadowlark and this was strongly contrasted with the screeching call of yellow-headed blackbirds. A swarm of kingbirds were waiting for us on the higher land and entertained us with their activity. Then we became aware of about 30 black swifts flying overhead. After Selkirk College we made a side trip up towards Verigin's Tomb in hopes of seeing a lazuli bunting. Buntings were heard but would not stay still long enough to be seen. Fortuitously a black-headed grosbeak did put on a show for us there. We were entertained by ducks with families and painted turtles at Waldie Island. Birds seen and/or heard were: turkey vulture, Canada goose, wood duck, gadwall, mallard with young, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, common goldeneye with young, bufflehead, common merganser, osprey on nest, bald eagle, American kestrel, ruffed grouse, American coot, killdeer, spotted sandpiper, black swift, belted kingfisher, hairy woodpecker, northern flicker, Western wood-pewee, Pacific slope flycatcher, western kingbird, eastern kingbird, red-eyed vireo, warbling vireo, American crow, common raven, tree swallow, violet-green swallow, northern rough-winged swallow, black-capped chickadee, mountain bluebird, Veery[sic], American robin, gray catbird, European starling, yellow warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, American redstart, common yellowthroat, black-headed grosbeak, lazuli bunting, spotted Towhee, chipping sparrow, clay-coloured sparrow, vesper sparrow, song sparrow, dark-eyed junco, red-winged blackbird, western meadowlark, yellow-headed blackbird, brown-headed cowbird, bullock's oriole, house finch. Photo (on cover, by Scott Wilson).

Hazel and Ed Beynon

Saturday, June 15 2019:

Birding and Picnic in the Slocan Valley -- Twelve WKNats members and one guest met at Winlaw on a beautiful sunny morning. The plan was to visit 5 interesting birding spots in the Winlaw to Slocan City area. Our first spot was the Winlaw Bluffs, a 100M cliff outcrop about 4 km S of Winlaw on the W side of the river, near the infamous Winlaw Rapids, where many people, including me, have dumped their canoe. A gorgeous spot with the rushing water and sheer cliffs and calls of White-throated Swifts. The group was thrilled by these superb flyers dashing at full tilt into their nest cavities high up above us. There were more than 20, the colony is thriving. Just as we reluctantly prepared to leave, 3 Red-tailed Hawks appeared. There has been a nest on a ledge for the past several years, but I thought it must have been abandoned. Two of them treated us to a marvelous display, diving and screaming, doing rolls and feints in a thrilling aerial dogfight. What a beginning to the morning! We then visited Pedro Creek marsh on the E of the river, lots of bird activity, a bit late in the day for rails, but Northern Waterthrush and American Redstarts singing and a close Red-naped Sapsucker posing beautifully. Our next stop was Larsens Ranch, adjacent to the Rail Trail, 1 Km South of Lemon Creek. Large fields here, with grassland species, but it was getting late in the morning and was quieter than hoped. We did however, get to see a female Lazuli Bunting-her mate was entertaining us with his beautiful song, and a male Mountain Bluebird joined Eastern Kingbirds on a nearby fence. Time had gone by far too quickly, folks were getting hungry, so we all left and gathered at Peter Mclver's Summer place 2km N of Lemon Creek for our picnic. With the Mulvey Group of the Valhallas in the background, and all 3 local vireo species competing with Swainson's Thrushes for our attention we socialized in the shade of a Weeping Willow before departing for home. About forty species were identified by the group in what all agreed was a thoroughly enjoyable trip. Photos by Diane White, next page.

Peter Mclver, leader



Saturday, July 6, 2019:

Little Slocan River/Koch Creek Hike -- Nine Nats hiked an easy trek along Little Slocan S. Rd. The portion we were on is an old forest service road following the Little Slocan River to Koch Creek. It was a warm wet day, with rain clouds above although it didn't rain, and sun appeared every so often. We lunched on a nice pebbly beach right at the river's edge where Little Slocan River and Koch Creek meet. The flora was rich with many shades of green, some wild flowers, some huckleberries just starting to ripen, and nice vistas of the river as we walked along. A few birds were heard, but the sound of the river drowned out their calls. The 4 km return distance took us a leisurely 3 hours. All in all a very pleasant outing. Photos and report submitted by

Alan McCuaig

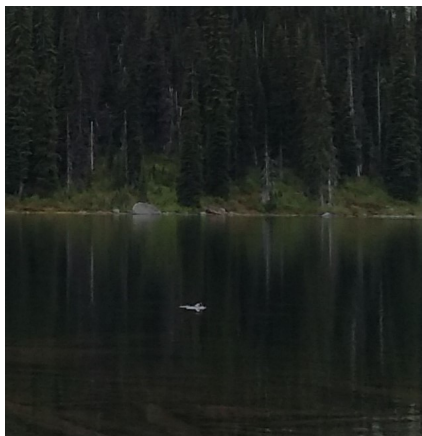




Wednesday, July 10, 2019:

Ross Lake Hike -- Although the day threatened thunderstorms in the afternoon, it did not deter five hardy, Naturalist souls. We drove up the bumpy logging road, jostling back and forth in the rain and miraculously, the rain stopped as we arrived at the trail sign. The mosquitoes were out in full force along with some orange cousins that did not seem to bite, but were trying to get into our eyes and up our noses. We thoroughly enjoyed the hike along the bear grass and upon arriving at the lake we enjoyed the many flowers, including but not limited to, huckleberries, bog orchid, valerian, bog laurel and "elephant" flower. The fish amused us with seeming, synchronized, leaping out of the water, attempting to eat as many flies and mosquitoes as they could. We arrived back at the car and agreed the distance, as stated on the website to be miles not km, so we determined the distance to be 5 miles return not 3.5 km return. One of my personal favourite hikes to a beautiful alpine lake and not a hint of thunder to spoil the hike, although that came later that evening with a vengeance!

Diane White



Sunday, July 14, 2019:

Flower Walk on Record Ridge -- It was warm when 13 WK Nats and two visitors assembled at the Record Ridge parking area and we expected that the day would be hot. Numerous flowers were seen right from the start of the hike. The conditions in the forested areas were better for flowers than on the ridge, which is quite open. Some flowers on the ridge had already gone to seed. Unfortunately the bitterroot was not yet blooming. We ate lunch at the bitterroot area where it became quite cool and we even had a slight shower. We then scurried back to the cars. Leaders were Hazel and Ed Beynon. Photos by Ed. The flower photo includes; harebells, fleabane, and bedstraw blooming. There are also thread-leaved phacelia seed heads at left of the photo and desert parsley seed heads at the top near the left.

Ed & Hazel Beynon



Sunday, August 18, 2019:

Twin Peaks -- This hike was originally scheduled for a Wednesday but, due to logging traffic on the quite narrow access road, the trip was rescheduled for Sunday, August 18th. We had done a recce a few days before and flagged a good route to the peaks so it was a relatively easy hike. Twelve WKNats and three guests enjoyed the scenery which included views of Castlegar, Tarry's, and Slocan Junction far below us, as well as mountains in all directions. There were good views of the Valhallas, Valkyrs, Mt Siwash, Grassy Mtn, and others.

The later summer flowers were quite spectacular with asters and buckwheat in great profusion. Some of the other flowers we saw were pearly everlasting, harebells, stonecrop, monk's hood, delphinium, and western hawkweed.

The birders in our group were excited to see a cooper's hawk and a rough-winged hawk. The rough-wing nests in the arctic so was already starting it's migration south. Other birds seen were olive-sided flycatcher, northern flicker, yellow-rumped warbler, 2 speeding vau's swifts, redbreasted nuthatch, and mountain chickadee.

When we reached the first peak one person felt that she didn't have the energy to continue on to the next peak so she waited there for us and rejoined the group when we returned to that peak. She enjoyed her solitary vigil.

All the participants expressed their pleasure with the many aspects of the hike. The open hillside we travelled over made for easy viewing of the nearby and distant scenery which included the endangered whitebark pine, both live trees and many picturesque old dead snags.

Ed and Hazel thank everyone who came on this outing. Photos—Beautiful buckwheat, the hikers and whitebark pine snags are by Hazel Beynon; Looking down at Castlegar, the Valhallas, we made it to the 2nd peak and 1st peak as seen from 2nd peak are by Brian Deon.

Text by the Beynons



Looking down at Castlegar



Beautiful buckwheat



The hikers



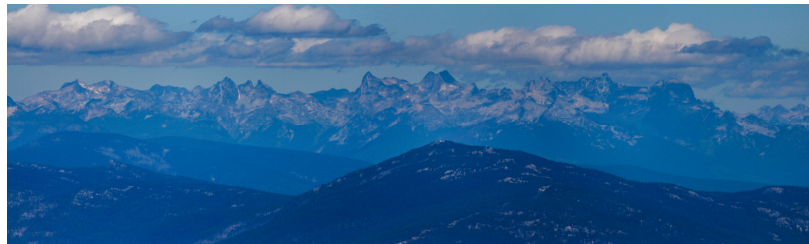
First peak as seen from second peak



Whitebark Pine snags



We made it to the second peak



The Valhallas

Ottawa ready if First Nations, B.C. can't produce caribou conservation plan soon

Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said southern mountain caribou face an 'imminent threat' to recovery across British Columbia. The federal government says it is hopeful that it can work with BC and First Nations to come up with a caribou-conservation plan soon – and if not, Ottawa is prepared to issue an emergency protection order.

Ottawa is talking with the provincial government and First Nations, particularly the West Moberly and Sauteau, federal Fisheries Minister Jonathan Wilkinson said in response to questions at a news conference on an unrelated issue Tuesday in Vancouver. He said he hoped for a plan either before the Oct. 21 election or shortly after, but that an emergency order could still be issued. "This government has certainly not taken an emergency order off the table ... we would certainly prefer to have a negotiated solution to this issue, but ... at the end of the day, we will make sure we fulfill our obligations," he said.

In May of 2018, federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said southern mountain caribou faced an "imminent threat" to recovery in 10 local population units across B.C., setting the stage for the federal government to issue an emergency protection order. Facing that prospect, B.C. negotiated recovery plans with Ottawa and the West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations. The draft partnership agreement was released this spring, but faced a backlash over concerns about the impact to forestry and recreation in caribou habitat.

Former B.C. Liberal cabinet minister Blair Lekstrom was appointed to report on community concerns. In June, the province released Mr. Lekstrom's report, which made 14 recommendations, including an interim moratorium on new resource developments in parts of northeastern B.C. which has been implemented. Critics said delays are putting caribou at risk and that a pending federal election could push back the process even further by making an emergency protection order unlikely. "What I see is more of the same – southern resident caribou were listed 16 years ago and we still don't have sufficient habitat protection for caribou," said Tara Martin, a professor in conservation decision science at the University of British Columbia and a spokesperson for a group of scientists leading research on endangered species. "The focus instead has been on wolf culling and penning of pregnant females. And while those actions might keep caribou in the system, they are not going to recover caribou." Recovery programs require habitat protection that would allow endangered animals to regain a foothold, she said.

B.C. is home to 52 herds of woodland caribou, which for decades have been under pressure because of habitat loss from logging and mining and predators. More than half of B.C.'s surviving herds are at risk of disappearing. Southern mountain caribou were designated as threatened under the federal Species At Risk Act in 2003. Reached Tuesday, Mr. Lekstrom said a process is under way to set up a "leadership table" that would bring together representatives from governments, First Nations and industry and said he did not expect an emergency order. "I'm happy with where we are at on this," Mr. Lekstrom said, adding that a first meeting is likely this month. "This is about neighbours coming together to making something work for the caribou," he added.

At the event Tuesday, Mr. Wilkinson said the federal government has approved \$1.8-million for projects through the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk and \$2.7-million for projects through the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk. Those funds will pay for projects including improved monitoring of white sturgeon on the Nechako River with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, the ministry said in a release.

All the following table is for is to take up space, much like the groups it encompasses. No political views are intended or expressed by the editor or the WKNA executive. You may have to enlarge it to read it. See percentage at top.

FEDERAL PARTY SURVEY ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLATFORMS SUMMARY				
2019 Canadian Federal Election				
	Yes	Partial	No	No Response
1 Will you immediately legislate a climate plan that will reduce Canada's emissions in line with keeping warming below 1.5°C?				
2 Will your climate plan clearly and precisely describe programs to reduce emissions from transportation, buildings and the oil and gas sector?				
3 Will you ensure that workers and their families thrive during the transition to a low-carbon economy, by extending the Task Force on Just Transition to include all fossil fuel industries?				
4 Will you ensure that fossil fuel projects will not be approved unless they are consistent with limiting emissions in Canada to keep warming below the 1.5°C threshold?				
5 Will you champion a connected and representative protected areas network of at least 30 per cent of land, freshwater and ocean by 2030?				
6 Will you ensure Canada's federally protected lands, freshwater and oceans are managed to the highest international standards for ecological integrity?				
7 Will you protect Canadians from pesticides, pollution and toxics in everyday products by modernizing the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and strengthening federal regulation of pesticides?				
8 Given our plastic pollution and waste crisis, will you work with other levels of government to implement a national strategy that includes a ban on the production, sale and distribution of the most problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics, and that works to create a circular economy focused on reuse?				
9 Will you create a Federal Environmental Bill of Rights that formally recognizes the legal right to a healthy environment?				
10 Will you uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the protection of Indigenous and treaty rights?				

This document is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to support or oppose, to promote or show disapproval of a platform, or to endorse or reject a party or any measures recommended by it.

To see full responses visit: election2019envirosurvey.ca

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.