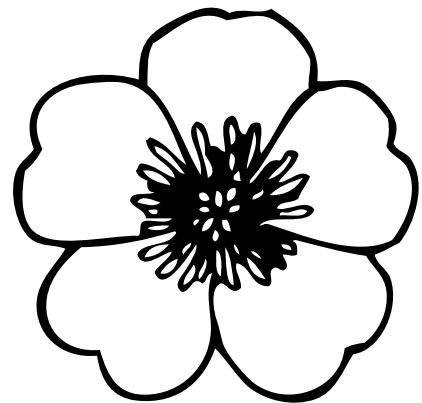


The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST KOOTENAY NATURALISTS'
ASSOCIATION



pg. 7



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DELEGATE TO BC NATURE

FIELD TRIPS

Contact the field trip director for information on trips and meetings. If you do not have email, contact the field trip director for hard copy updates.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for the next newsletter is **June 15, 2022**. Material accepted by the Editor 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.

FIELD TRIPS

Just a Reminder

1. Common courtesy and common sense dictates that you inform the contact person to confirm your attendance at an event or 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. Do not wait until the last minute to contact if you are interested in any of our events as leaders 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 + \$2). 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 newsletter editor. The leader may delegate this, of course. The writer also has the obligation to get the report submitted BY THE DEADLINE.

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 allowed on any of our outings.

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



NELSON NATUREKIDS CLUB ACTIVITY REPORT

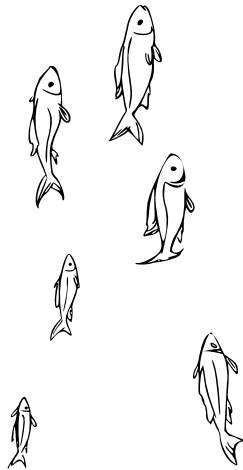
BY JENNI STOL

2021 was a challenging year for our local NatureKids club. Due to COVID restrictions, we had to move our programming online for the first half of the year. While truly thankful to have many knowledgeable mentors share their passion with us in a virtual space, we were eager to get back to the heart of our club's mission, which is to gather our families in nature for exploration, play, and learning.



Fishing at Cottonwood Lake.

As restrictions eased, we returned to in-person programs in the summer. Our first big event was a day of fishing at Cottonwood Lake, under the guidance of Freshwater Fisheries Society educators who taught our families about fish conservation and helped the kids learn to cast before heading out on the dock to try their luck. We continued our fishy theme in the fall with a trip to the Kokanee Creek spawning channels, led by always engaging head naturalist Joanne Siderius. We enjoyed tree planting with professional forestry workers and a walk at Sproule Creek with Rob Macrae to learn about mushrooms and lichens. Our final event of the year was the Christmas Bird Count for Kids, which we completed at Lakeside Park.



Families looking for waterfowl at the Christmas Bird Count for Kids at Lakeside Park.

Our little club has grown to over 20 families, and we have a great schedule of events planned for 2022, including a series of activities led by local indigenous educators who will help deepen our connection to the land, the water, and each other.



Families learning about the wonders of mushrooms and lichen at Sproule Creek.

About NatureKids BC

Established in 2000 and originally called the Young Naturalists Club of BC, NatureKids has grown into a broad network of nature clubs for families across the province.

NatureKids helps children aged 5-12 to get outdoors to explore, play, learn about and take action for nature, engaging in citizen science initiatives and environmental stewardship activities.

To learn more visit www.naturekidsbc.ca. Our club relies on volunteer nature mentors to lead our events. If you are able to volunteer, please contact club leader Jenni Stol at nelson@naturekidsbc.ca.

Opportunities are available to mentor events in and around Nelson, as well as to help with club leadership and participate in virtual events.

GOOD INTENTIONS GONE BAD

A SLOW RELEASE BOMB THAT WILL DEVASTATE OUR FORESTS IS EXPLODING IN THE WEST KOOTENAY AND BOUNDARY REGIONS OF B.C.

BY ED BEYNON

Summary

Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) trees were introduced to the Trail B.C. area to stabilize steep banks that had been denuded by emissions from the local smelter in the past. These trees have done well in West Kootenay and Boundary, so well that they are endangering local forests and biodiversity. Black Locust reproduce primarily by cloning, once a tree reaches about 4 years of age it can send out hundreds of shoots/clones to a radius of about 30 metres. Then these clones, can in 4 years, do the same thing. Growth is exponential. It can quickly spread over large areas and shade the ground so that it is difficult for local plants to get enough sunlight to regenerate. Also the Black Locust is a member of the pea family and it fixes nitrogen in the soil. Local plants are adapted to quite barren soil (low nitrogen) so don't regenerate efficiently in richer soils, whereas weeds do well. Other concerns are, that it is suspected of allelopathy (may inhibit the growth of other plants) and could block historical successional trajectories. It is a species that

unfortunately will likely flourish with climate change and rising temperatures.

The Governments of BC have essentially ignored the Black Locust invasion for the past 70+ years. There is no up to date account of the distribution of this species and control has been very limited. The current government assumption is that Black Locust is an early successional species and that other local species will succeed it, and that Black Locust requires full sun and will only thrive at forest edges. These assumptions are incorrect and action must be undertaken to halt the current Black Locust invasion.

The BC Government must declare Black Locust a High Priority Invasive Species and action must be taken to control this TREE KILLER. (a term used to describe Black Locust by TreeCanada.ca) <https://treecanada.ca/resources/tree-killers/black-locust/>

References

USDA and USFS <https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/robpse/all.html#Successional%20status>

Ontario Invasive Plants Ontarioinvasiveplants.ca Black Locust pg. 2

Impact in West Kootenay and Boundary Regions

A. Black Locust trees were introduced to this area in the 1950's, or earlier. They were planted to control erosion of sulphur dioxide denuded, steep slopes around the Trail smelter. The expected life span of Black Locust is considered to be 75 to 90 years, thus if Black Locust forms a successional forest its successor should now be in evidence. Where is the successor forest species? A successor species is not evident. Black Locust is forming a permanent monoculture in West Kootenay and Boundary. They are not a successional species in this area.

B. Black Locust was thought to require full sun so was expected to only occupy forest edges. Unfortunately riparian areas, open forest, roads, cut blocks and fire damaged areas offer enough sun for this species to proliferate. A mature Black Locust can place clones into partially shaded locations and support it's clones while they develop.





Black Locust (still with green leaves, native species have already dropped their leaves, November 2021) invading mixed forest at Km 1 on Bear Creek FSR. A mature Black Locust is at right. Black Locust extend to Bear Creek (Less than 100 metres from here). It also has invaded the Cottonwood dominated riparian zone of Bear Creek for 1 km plus to the Columbia River and upstream from this photo an undetermined distance.



Black Locust (no green leaves yet, native trees are in leaf, April 2021) invading mixed forest adjacent to Birchwood Drive in Waneta Village



Conclusion

Black Locust infestation is extensive, especially near towns and cities in the West Kootenay and Boundary Regions. Two readily accessible examples of Black Locust invasion of open forests are shown above. These areas will probably soon become monocultures of Black Locust. Much of the south facing to west facing slopes in this area have open forests and may readily become monocultures of Black Locust also. Chances of Black Locust forests being merely successional in the subject area

are not good. If there is a successional forest it is not going to be composed of native species because of the nitrogen rich soils created by Black Locust.

Black Locust is a species that unfortunately will likely flourish with climate change and rising temperatures. Healthy ecosystems can resist climate change much more effectively than damaged ecosystems can. Now is the time to halt the destruction of ecosystems by Black Locust.

The BC Government must take direct and immediate action to define the scope of Black Locust infestation and to stop the further destruction of local forests by Black Locust trees. This will probably also require taking steps to require land holders to be responsible for control of plants on their respective properties.





February's haloed full moon above the north shore of Kootenay Lake. This phenomenon is caused by the refraction of moonlight as it passes through prism-like ice crystals suspended in a gauzy layer of cirrus or cirrostratus clouds.

- Jamie Bastedo