



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 V2T 6Z8
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NEWSLETTER

May 2008

*“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*

*Don't forget to
renew your 2008
CVN membership!!*

Meeting Schedule

May 14, 2008

Our program is about **MOUNTAIN VIEW CONSERVATION AND BREEDING CENTRE** near Fort Langley. It is a leading non-profit Canadian facility that breeds endangered species in family groups for re-introduction back into their natural habitat in Canada and around the world.

We will hear from **Vince Beier** about these efforts and programs for breeding local endangered species including the Oregon Spotted Frog and Spotted Owl.

June 11, 2008



**Annual Picnic
at Bunbury's place at
6:30 pm (note time)**

Their address is 4799 Olund Road. To get there take Highway 11 north to Harris Road, and then turn west. Take Harris Road to Olund Road and turn south (right). It will be a “potluck picnic”.

Bring a main dish or salad enough to share.
Potlucks seem to attract big appetites.
Strawberries and ice cream will be provided.
Bring your own cutlery, dishes and chairs.

Afterwards we will go for a walk through the trails along a tributary of Nathan Creek.



FIELD TRIPS

The **FIELD TRIPS** could be 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 **Michael Manley at 604-859-9982.**

N.B. PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER A DAY BEFORE THE FIELDTRIP OF YOUR INTENT.

This will greatly help in planning and carpooling, etc.

May 29 to June 1, 2008



BC Nature Spring Conference and AGM in Penticton

The theme of the conference is "South Okanagan: A Century of Change"

Check out the Winter 2007 edition of BC Nature for details on the speakers and the many wonderful fieldtrips that are planned.

May 31, 2008 - Saturday 6:00 am to Noon

Glen Valley Bird Count - Glen Valley Watershed Society

Here is your chance to spend an enjoyable day in one of the most beautiful parts of the Fraser Valley. Glen Valley is a quiet, rural area nestled against the Fraser River and straddling the Langley/Abbotsford border. With a diversity of habitats Glen Valley is home to a wide variety of birds and wildlife.

The GVWS will be hosting a wrap-up barbecue to give everyone a chance to enjoy some good food and mingle with other birding enthusiasts.

Meeting place is the Fort Langley Winery located at 26100 block of 84th Avenue. To register or for more information contact Sarah Atherton, Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) 604-532-3517 or satherton@tol.bc.ca

June

Mountain View Conservation and Breeding Centre

Fieldtrip to be arranged if there is enough interest.

June 20, 21 and 22 (weekend)
Bird Blitz in Manning Park, BC

MANNING PARK **26th Anniversary**
BIRD BLITZ
 June 20, 21 & 22, 2008

*A spectacular weekend of birding in a beautiful park!
 Open to novices and experts alike.*

\$35 Per Birder Children Are FREE **Birding Fee Includes....**

-  Two nights camping at Lone Duck Campground on Lightning Lake — noon Friday, to Sunday.
-  Guest speaker and barbecue, with salads, buns, and drinks provided (bring your own protein!). This year's guest speaker is **Al Grass!**
-  Manning Park boasts over 200 bird species, including coastal, mountain, and interior birds.

To register: Ph: (604) 869-3745 E-mail: kpearce@uniserve.com

Hotel • Cabins Manning Park Lodge is offering birders a special room rate — space is limited, so book early!
 Manning Park Lodge — Ph: 250-840-8822 (rooms, cabins, chalets)

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 FEDERATION OF BC NATURALISTS

Then it was time to scramble up a rather steep embankment to the railroad track. Wild ginger, strawberries and loose gravel! The three of us who are not as young as we used to be had some trouble with this, where upon the youngest of our native guide, very quietly, courteously, and efficiently gave us a hand up and for the rest of the outing kept an eye on us. That was much appreciated. Henk and I had noted, on previous occasions, that when salmon, corn and bannock are served the elders are invited to table first! We noted it, I might add, with approval and delight!



FIELD TRIPS REPORTS

March 8, 2008 - Saturday *The Garry Oak Ecological Reserve at Yale*

At 11 o'clock in the morning, 25 Naturalists gathered at the Fraser River in Yale. Seven from the Central Valley Naturalists, Bev and Bill Ramey from Vancouver, Gladys Brown, organizer of the outing, came in all the way from Midway, and 15 from the Chilliwack Field Naturalists.

We were met by two First Nation's Guides, and ferried in groups of five across the Fraser River, a very fast trip in beautiful surroundings. We disembarked on the sandy beach of a little bay; we had time to admire the babbling brook emptying in the Fraser, waiting for everyone to make it across.

We walked mostly on the railroad tracks, but from time to time had to make way for long, long freight trains. Garry Oaks were everywhere and Ocean Spray, ferns, mosses, trainsof course walking the track is a good way of limiting the impact of 54 feet! The Garry Oaks were kind of scrawny compared to the big gnarled ones in Victoria. You wonder how they came to be there. Our guides told us that besides bear and deer there are mountain goats in the area on a cliff just above us. We did not see them, but it is nice to know they are there.

In time we were all ferried back in groups of five, to our cars. I happened to be one of the first back, and my lunch was in a locked car, but no need to suffer —I was offered all sorts of goodies, I can highly recommend the Venema honey loaf, and don't you just love Naturalists fellowship?

The reason I was so keen to go on this trip was the chance to meet Gladys Brown and Annabelle Rempel who took part in getting the ecological reserve established. I hoped to learn how they managed to do that. So we met, and they explained: it was Dr. Bert Brink who organized

and accomplished it! Another example of the huge legacy Bert Brink left B.C. and all us fortunate B.C.'ers!

Johanna Saaltink

March 29, 2008 - Saturday ***Birch Bay State Park***

Four intrepid (!) naturalists set out for Washington's Birch Bay State Park in weather that ranged from drizzle to driving snow to heavy rain. The park ranger, who incidentally drove to meet us in a nifty, soft-sided electric car (max. speed 25 mph), was amazed that we showed up but obligingly gave us a verbal overview of the park, maps and species lists. To our delight, the sun came out soon after we arrived and we had a lovely afternoon.

The area was logged at the turn of the century and has diverse re-growth of birch (black, white and hybrids), Douglas-fir, cedar, hemlock, big-leaf maple and some very large Sitka spruce. Salmonberry, Indian plum, Oregon grape, wild lily-of-the-valley and trilliums were in bloom in the well-developed under storey. The songs of yellow-crowned kinglets, chestnut-backed chickadees, song sparrows and wrens accompanied us on our walk along a pleasant, short self-guided interpretive trail that leads through the woods to a large marsh. Terrell Creek drains the marsh and parallels the beach for 3 miles before emptying into the bay. This area is one of the few remaining undisturbed estuaries in north Puget Sound.



There are nearly two miles of beautiful cobbles beach in the park and there was a wide assortment

of waterfowl present including common loons, surf and white-winged scoters, common mergansers, bald eagles, green-winged teal (on the Creek), harlequin ducks, scaups, common and Barrow's goldeneyes, pintails, and glaucous-winged gulls. We were amazed to hear that not only is clamming and crabbing (apparently the bay is full of crab pots in August) encouraged, but a patch of the bay is seeded to non-native oysters which are harvested by park visitors.

Followed by a snack in the town of Birch Bay, we drove north to Semiahmoo Bay and briefly explored Semiahmoo Spit. Huge mansions now dot the shoreline in places here, however the area still appears to have great potential for birding, walking and particularly cycling. We'll be back! Many thanks to Michael and Janine for leading this wonderful trip.

Submitted by Kathleen Wilkinson.

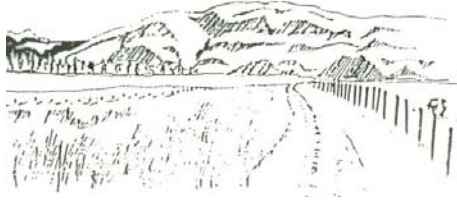
CONSERVATION

"To keep it worth knowing"

In 2008 to date, CVN members have commented to city council and staff on the following environmental issues:

- Expansion of Whatcom Road through the Vicarro Ranch. Concerns expressed include loss and fragmentation of habitat, the route selection process, whether proposed mitigation would be funded and the extent to which wildlife culverts and other mitigation measures would be used.
- Infilling of the Marshall Road ravine to permit road construction and residential development. In view of existing road construction in east Abbotsford and road upgrading proposed in the city's Master Transportation Plan, the need for this road is not apparent to us and the impacts on wildlife (including several Species at Risk)

and their habitat will be substantial. We also feel that the ecological services (erosion control, climate amelioration, carbon storage for example) and other benefits for residents provided by these fast disappearing green spaces are not receiving enough consideration in municipal planning decisions.



- Proposed Vedder Mountain subdivision. We recommended that the city expand within its existing Urban Development Boundary before sprawling onto our valuable mountainsides, request more rigorous environmental assessments at appropriate times of the year in our Environmental Development Permit Areas, and evaluate wildlife habitat and identify particular areas of conservation value before further development or resource extraction proceeds.

The **Central Valley Naturalists** are well-represented on the city's **Environmental Advisory Committee** (4 members) and these members sit on various committees including sustainable business, wildlife habitat, waste management and aquifer/watershed management. Some recent topics of discussion at the EAC have been the potential impacts of waste to energy facilities proposed by Metro Vancouver, whether the city should propose a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides by homeowners or adopt the Integrated Pest Management approach, and a very comprehensive groundwater management plan. Advocacy suggestions have been provided to concerned homeowners in west Abbotsford who are opposed to a proposed development in their area. Steve Howard has agreed to do a bird survey for them.

April 12, 2008 - Saturday ***Hogan Nature Park Cleanup***

A surprise was awaiting the large group of members who turned out for the annual cleanup of



Council recently passed an EAC recommendation to conduct a biophysical inventory and environmentally significant/sensitive area analysis of Sumas Mountain that would allow areas in need of protection to be identified (and hopefully protected) before incompatible uses proceed.

Hogan Family Park – **THE SUN!** What a pleasant day was had by all. We met about 9.30 am and the group weeded out blackberries, comfrey, and grasses that were invading the car park. Rakes, shovels, and wheel barrows appeared, and many hands made light work. Jackie found a long-toed salamander in the leaves as she was weeding.

*Earlier in the morning in his walkabout, Glenn had seen a **snowshoe hare** there for the first time.*



Robins looked on and two bald eagles roared over on the thermals overseeing the work on their park with approval.

After a delicious coffee break, Glenn Ryder took the group for an informative walk through the park. White trilliums, bitter cress, wood violets, false lily of the valley were in bloom as we came to the little bridge. Little oak leaf ferns and assorted mushrooms can be seen along the trail too. Signs of owls were evident on the forest floor. A winter wren sang to us as we passed by. We also heard a Bewick's wren singing in the sunlight. Glenn showed us a brown creeper's nest in a tree, and he also found an old humming bird nest - amazing how small and soft this nest was. Glenn also pointed out a robin's nest and an old cedar waxwing nest and a barred owl feather.

Many thanks to all who came and made the day so enjoyable. Thanks to Glenn for his informative walk and to Alice and Margaret for the coffee and goodies. As I drove home the robin landed on the

rock by the gate and looked approvingly at the work we had done.

Michael Manley

Fraser Valley Regional Watersheds Coalition



The popularity of **Cultus Lake** is undeniable, soon to be evidenced by the crowds that will be making their way to the area as summer approaches.

It offers spectacular scenery and recreational opportunities that attracts people from all over the world.

The presence and continued spread of Eurasian Milfoil throughout the lake is a strong indicator that not all is perfect in this idyllic setting. A multi-stakeholder group has recently started an initiative called the **Cultus Lake Aquatic Stewardship Strategy (CLASS)** to help understand and improve the health of the Cultus Lake system. CLASS is made up of concerned residents, non-profit organizations, and all levels of government. Their primary focus is on milfoil, but they are also attempting to look at all other



ecological issues in the Cultus Lake watershed that impact lake water quality and the local ecosystem.

On May 15, the Fraser Valley Regional Watersheds Coalition will host an interactive presentation by CLASS Chair, Marion Robinson of the Fraser Basin Council. She will be providing information on what the Cultus Lake Aquatic Stewardship Strategy is, why it was formed, what it is working towards, and how the community can participate. Please come out and share your

thoughts or ideas that may help this initiative and the Cultus Lake environment.

The presentation and discussion will be held on May 15 from 7:00 - 8:00 pm in Room A201 at the University (College) of the Fraser Valley Chilliwack campus. All are welcome to attend and participate. Please contact me for more details.

Sincerely,

Lance Lilley
Watershed Planner
Fraser Valley Regional District /
Fraser Valley Regional Watersheds Coalition
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FEATURE PLANT

Ostrich fern



Matteuccia struthiopteris
Photo by Lorna Allen

Ostrich fern is the largest of the ferns that

naturally occur in Alberta, sometimes getting as tall as 1.5 to 2 m. It has a number of distinctive features, but noticeable in the spring is the method that the fronds unfurl. This process is called “circinate vernation” – a fancy term that means a coiled (circinate) arrangement of leaves in the bud (vernation). Most people call these “fiddleheads” as they first pop up. Although the ostrich fern fiddleheads are considered the tastiest, there are other species of ferns whose fronds unroll in a similar way. Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) is another large, native fern with edible fiddleheads. But the fiddleheads of yet another large one, bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), may cause illness so probably should not be eaten. Circinate vernation is relatively common in ferns – be sure you know what species those fiddleheads belong to before you decide to eat them, because some can make you ill and some species are considered rare.

MILL LAKE HAPPENINGS

There is a different duck on the lake....it is white/beige, slightly bigger than a mallard....has a more round body, at first thought it might be a kind of goose, but it ‘quacked’ so a definite duck. It has a red-brown ring around it’s lower neck very much like a loon’s...in fact I think the ring is made up in vertical small stripes and bigger on the back than the front. Same colour around the eyes....eyes are like a Haida carved totemred brown around the outer part. It is NOT in the book!

My father lives in the condo directly opposite the walkway bridge. He also has noticed this duck and cannot identify it. (He’s been on the lake 30 yrs.)

Anyway, thought you might be interested. We also had about 20 trumpeter swans on the lake in February. Quite a delight. The cormorants got together and tried to ‘bomb’ them to show their displeasure and scare them away.

Lots a babies here...goslings. A family of 9 babies kidnapped the 3 babies of another family.

I’ve seen this happen a couple of times. Also the ducks are having their little ones now. Mallards are such bad parents!! The eagle and osprey are after them every 10 minutes, poor little things. I’ve never seen them get a gosling though. The geese are amazing parents, and of course the white domestic goose has adopted a family.

The osprey and eagle had a fight and believe it or not the osprey won! The old male on the lake would let the osprey catch a fishthen go after him and make him drop it. This fellow is trying to get them right out of his turf!



BIG turtles on the logs. I’m trying to get Abbotsford Parks to get me another log so we can anchor it on the lake in front of us. We had one, but they came free in that big storm last year and my father actually took them and anchored them to deadheads on his end of the lake.

Also, a homeless man sleeping at the base of the hill just newly renovated by the pool. Another idiot going through the park on one of those horrible small 4 wheelers at 3:30 in the A.M. Going about 60 miles an hour and the noise is as bad a dirt bike!

CVN EXECUTIVE

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Submitted by Patty Michaud, a Mill Lake” lily pad cutter”.

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; the newsletter will be sent by e-mail 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.

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 "BC nature" (4 issues per year)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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Additional donations gratefully accepted Amount \$ _____

Please mail to Central Valley Naturalists, P.O. Box 612, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6Z8, or give to Jacqui at the hospitality desk at the monthly meeting. Membership fees are due January 1st each year.

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