

Grant, James

(1920 – 1986)

Founder and first Vice President of North Okanagan Naturalist's Club



Jim Grant was born in Trinity Valley near Lumby in 1920. He went to school in the North Okanagan and became a farmer and logger before enlisting in the Canadian Army in 1941. He served in the signal corps in Europe until 1946.

On his return to Canada Jim was employed by the Federal Forest Entomology Laboratory in Vernon. His work took him throughout the Province and enabled him to increase his expertise in ornithology, entomology and botany.

On July 1, 1965, Jim Grant, John Shepherd and Kay Bartholomew were wading in the tiny pools of water at Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve, which is near Salmon Arm, when Jim looked down and exclaimed "Oh, look at that." He bent down and looked at a small orchid in the water. It was the first sighting of the 'Bog Orchid' (*Liparis loeselii*) which became our Club emblem. Joan Heriot designed a lapel pin showing the orchid. For many years she issued one to new members at 50 cents each and kept a great

record of the sales. (From NONC website - article by Kay Bartholomew, graphics by Harold Sellers)

In 1970, Jim was appointed Field Studies Coordinator for the Vernon School District (22) and remained there until his retirement in 1978. His dedication and extensive knowledge of natural history made him a mentor and inspiration to many naturalists and students in the Okanagan area.

Jim was a founding member of the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC), published at least thirty articles on birds and their biology and operated a hospital for injured hawks and owls from his home in Lavington.

Following his death in 1986, the "Jim Grant Memorial Fund" was established to acquire, in the future, property at the south end of Swan Lake for a Nature Sanctuary and an educational facility, to continue the work he fostered throughout his life.

In May 2010 a tree was planted at the Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary and in 2015 a bench was placed at Swan Lake Nature Reserve in memory of Jim Grant.





Tree planting at Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary
Kay Bartholomew & Peter Mayfield, 2010

Excerpts: BC Nature Magazine, Spring 2015, Submitted by Lyall Webster

Swan Lake – An Okanagan Refuge

The North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC) has, since 1968, been concerned with setting up a nature reserve as a means of protecting some of the natural environment of the lake....In 1993, NONC helped the Nature Trust of BC to acquire an eight-acre strip of land on the east shore, known as the "Kaminsky Property". It is a bird sanctuary not open to the public. The club planted trees, added bird boxes and is the land steward for the preserve.

In 2005, NONC was able to interest Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) in purchasing land at the south end of the lake for a nature reserve. This was an area of long interest to the club as the richest area of the lake for wildlife with its extensive wetlands including two creeks and abundant upland areas. The sale went through and 123 acres were acquired in 2006 with donations from DUC, Regional District North Okanagan (RDNO), Environment Canada, BC, Trust for Public Lands, NONC and the Bishop Wild Bird Foundation..... The Master Plan keeps the land in its natural state and access by the public is arranged for minimum impact on wildlife.

Several interpretive signs have been added to the trail and in the bird blind and this year (2015) the club added a bench in memory of James Grant, a noted local naturalist and a founding member of NONC.