

North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

# Newspacket

[www.nonc.ca](http://www.nonc.ca)

May-June 2010

## Hike to Yeoward Mountain



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**North Okanagan Naturalists' Club  
(NONC)  
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\* Land & Resource Management Plan (for Okanagan-Shuswap)  
\*\* Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Plan

# North Okanagan Naturalists' Club

# Newspacket

**May-June 2010 Issue Vol. 38 No. 3**



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*Opinions expressed in Newspacket are solely those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the N.O.N.C. unless so described.*

*Articles and illustrations of natural history, and news and event notices are welcome. Copy should be delivered to Harold Sellers, Editor, e-mail [hikerharold@gmail.com](mailto:hikerharold@gmail.com)*

## **OUR COVER THIS ISSUE**

*A NONC hike to Yeoward Mountain in 2008. Photo by Vivian Merchant. See Calendar on page 4.*

## **NONC Notes**

by Kay Bartholomew, Secretary

### **In Memory of John Sherwood**

During World War II John Sherwood was an army dispatcher, riding a motor bike round the countryside (admitting to quite often getting lost!). After the war he took up commercial growing (in England known as a market gardener). Thirty years later he and Mary thought they'd like to retire to Canada to be near her daughter Penny Bayne. They first came out to Canada at Christmas 1979 to 'have a look'. It was a 'green Christmas'! John was very impressed (little did he know!). One of the reasons he liked it here was because of the Naturalists' Club.



John attended his first Field Day and Dinner in 1981 and attended every one thereafter until 1995 when he 'fell by the wayside'. He was a 'loner', but when he took on a project he did his ultimate best to see the job was well done. In November 1982 he was on the Executive and became interested in just about everything in which the Club was involved. We used his home on many occasions; during one Club 'Social' he and Mary sold bunches of dried flowers which they had grown in order to make money for the Club. He attended the Co-Ordinated Resource Management Plan meetings and one time led a Brenda Mines Tour for members.

***continued on page 4***

## **NONC Notes continued from page 3**

John was a man of ideas. In November 1984 he felt the Club should do something 'constructive', so he suggested the Club plant cottonwoods at Cosen's Bay to take the place of some of the older trees when they died. This was turned down because of cattle problems which had to be solved first.

In March 1986 it was John who suggested buying the Anderson property at Swan Lake. His idea was that it would be a great memorial to Jim Grant whom he very much admired. This was a special Swan Lake project as for many, many years the Club had been interested in acquiring property at Swan Lake but barriers were always erected. In 1986 John became Chairman of the new committee. Too much can't be said of his devotion to this project. When it was doomed because of acquisition problems it wasn't long before he suggested buying a piece of the Kaminski property which he, along with our member Bob McVickar, had spent hours and hours working on, planting & watering trees, erecting osprey poles and dealing with rodents and insects.

John, with his great sense of humour, took the Club 'to heart'. He literally 'devoted his life' to the Club. When asked why he did all that, he said "I want to give back something to the group that has given so much to me".

John died on Friday, April 2, 2010, in the Polson Residential Facility. ❖

### **Receive the latest NONC news**

Subscribe to our weekly e-mail messages. Don't miss an event and find out about recent additions or changes. Send Harold Sellers, hikerharold@gmail.com, your e-mail address to subscribe.

## **Swan Lake Nature Reserve**

### **Update**

by Lyall Webster

**T**he Swan Lake Committee has been busy now that spring is here. We organized a cleanup at BX Creek April 1st, taking out excess debris before the spring run-off started. The work party was made up of Ray Arlt, Denis Seymour, Adam Moss and Lyall Webster. When finished we inspected the birdblind, everything is fine and birders have been recording their sightings in the observation book. A great flock of coots out on the lake.

April 16th was our day for tree planting. Volunteers planted about 75 Pacific Willow whips and 75 Black Cottonwood rooted stock, kindly donated by Mike Carlson. These were planted in two areas along Swan Lake Creek to replace trees which had not survived. Many thanks to our crew of volunteers who were Denis Seymour, Adam Moss, Bob Hebbert, Ray Arlt, Lyall Webster, and Fred and Ina Wisse. The previous week Mike planted about 70 Sandbar Willow whips along the creek. These small willows do well in the wet so hopefully they'll flourish. Thanks again to Mike Carlson who has helped us so much over the years we have been planting trees and shrubs, a lot of them provided by him. Upcoming work will be staking and caging the new plantings, keeping the weeds down and, of course, the watering.

It is hoped that some trail work will take place this year along the south bank of BX Creek. This would start just west of the railroad tracks, past the new pond and up to the footbridge. Tolko donated \$20,000 a few years ago for trails so there is some money available. ❖

**Report All Poachers and Polluters  
(RAPP) - toll-free, 24-hour, line at 1-877  
952-7277**

## Calendar

**NONC** meets on the first Wednesday of the month from September (exception: Sept 8 this year) through May inclusive, starting at 7:30 pm, at The Best Western Vernon Lodge, 3914 32nd Street, Vernon. Remember to "lug a mug"!

### **Bird Watching Outings:**

Meet at Performing Arts Centre at 9:00 am.  
Peter Mayfield 549-8478 for dates.

### **Saturday, May 8 - Field Day & Dinner.**

9:00 am, Field Day at Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park, meeting at the Twin Bay parking lot. We will divide into Botany, Birding, Hiking and Entomology groups.

12 noon, Lunch at Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary. Bring a picnic lunch; veggies & juice supplied.

1:15 pm, Nature Activities on the trails at Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary

6:30 pm, Dinner at Okanagan College, \$25 p.p., Genevieve Dunbar of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be our speaker

**Wednesday, May 12 - Knapweed Knockdown** at Alan Brooks Nature Centre, 9:30 am. Contact Peter Mayfield 549-8478.

**Wednesday, May 19 - Cool's Pond Work Bee.** Contact Ann Langer 1-250-547-6153.

**May 30-June 5 - Gavin Lake Field Camp - \$450.** pp includes food & accommodation. For more info see page 13 of your spring B.C. Nature magazine. Only a few spots left so call ASAP. Contact Robyn Thornton 549-2714.

**June 18-20 - Manning Park Bird Blitz-** see page 8 of your B.C. Nature magazine Spring issue.

**Thursday, July 8- Mara Meadows - Tentative - A** NONC tradition & unique eco-system. Contact Pam Jenkins-545-0490.

**Thursday, July 22 - Yeoward Mountain** [see May-June 2010

our cover this issue]. A Monashee hike for great views & wildflowers. Bring a lunch. Wear hiking boots. Meet 8:00 am at Priest Valley parking lot. Contact Ray Arlt 542-2058.

**Saturday, July 24 - Kaloya Beach Park - Oyama** end of Kal Lake. Swim, picnic & optional short easy nature walk plus visit Gatzke's Farm Market. Meet 10:00 am at Priest Valley parking lot. Contact Lyn Smith-542-6520.

**August 17-24 - The NONC Summer Camp** will use Radium Hot Springs as a base this year. We will organize hikes in Kootenay National Park and to the west of Radium in the Purcells; hikes will range from easy to moderate with perhaps one difficult one. Participants are responsible for their own breakfasts and lunches; we will organize communal dinners. Those wishing to motel will use the Mountain Springs Motel, phone 877 800 8822; [www.mountainsprings.bc.ca](http://www.mountainsprings.bc.ca). The campers and RVers are using the Canyon RV Resort; phone 250 347 9564; [www.canyonrv.com](http://www.canyonrv.com). To date 11 club members have signed up. Phone Bob Hebbert at 250-542-2302 if interested.

**Wednesday, September 8 - NONC meeting,** 7:30 pm at the Best Western, Vernon Lodge.

**Saturday, September 25 - Heritage Tree Walk** - Meet at 9:30 am by Galaxy Cinema parking at Polson Mall. Bring a lunch. Contact Pat McAllister 558-1440.

**Thursday, October 7 - Gellatly Nut Farm - The** nut harvest & a heritage trail in the West Kelowna area. Lunch at the Comfort Inn after our visit. Call Robyn Thornton 549-2714 by Sept.29. Meet 9:30 am at Priest Valley parking lot.

**October 22-24 - Nakusp Hot Springs.** Stay at the chalets, soak in the pools, explore the nature trails & visit the quaint town of Nakusp. Perhaps Halcyon hot springs too. Please call by October 1st. Contact Lyn Smith 542-6520.

## Trip Reports

**Thursday, April 8**

### **Largest tree and oldest tree in Kal Park**

by Pamela Jenkins

On April 8th, six of us started at the Red Gate of Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park and hiked the open hillside up to the largest Ponderosa Pine in the park. This had been one of Paddy Mackie's favourite trips, and is sometimes included in our trip list.



It had rained, which may be why some of the usual hikers had not come. Everywhere was still wet, trees and grasses glistening with dew drops, and the damp conditions controlling the dust we sometimes encounter.

There were still some buttercups (*ranunculus*), but also spring beauty, desert parsley, yellow bells, blue eyed mary, draba and other lomentiums.

It was very windy so we stayed in a treed valley for the descent before following various trails and ending up at the Turtle Head viewpoint, which is often misnamed as Rattlesnake Point. Rattlesnake Hill is the hill above the largest tree. It was far too windy to eat our lunches at the picnic table, but we peeked at the oldest juniper at the edge of a cliff below.

We followed the trail down to a lower level

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and ate our lunch at a sheltered spot sitting on felled trees. Other sightings included a golden eagle, a hawk, a pair of towhees and various people walking their dogs.

**Saturday, April 10**

### **Oyama Lake Alpaca Farm**

by Robyn Thornton

Ten NONC'ers went to see Jim and Darlene's alpacas at their property in Oyama, overlooking Kalamalka and Wood lakes. The day we were there, three groups of the animals were being kept in three separate areas. "The girls", as Jim called them, about 14 in all, were in a barn, waiting to be released into their pasture. To the right of this pasture, four young males stood at the fence regarding us with curiosity. In a lower yard, about 11 males congregated, also watching whatever activity was taking place.

We also visited the other two groups of animals from behind their fences. They sniffed our hands, but did not want to be touched. Jim answered all our questions, then Darlene ushered us into the shop and an adjoining living room area where she demonstrated how she spins the wool that has been washed and carded. She also explained how she felts the fleece to make beautiful scarves and vests. This year, the shearing was to take place the Saturday after we were there, so we saw the alpacas in full fleece.

Then we spent time in the shop, which is stocked with scarves, shawls, hats, toques, mittens, inner soles and vests, mostly created by Darlene, who has won prizes for her creations, as well as warm socks that are factory made from the yarn that Darlene sends them. As a souvenir of our visit each of us selected a Ziploc baggie containing a sample of fleece named for the alpaca from which it came – Zack, Cusco, Chloe, Cassidy et al.

*continued on next page*



After one last visit to the adult males for a group photo and individual contacts, we headed out for lunch. After lunch, one carload headed back to Vernon via the Commonage, where they stopped to check out the Great Horned Owl nesting near the turn off to the Allan Brooks Centre. Betty, Laura and I went in search of a short trail on the east side of Wood Lake.

**Thursday, April 15**  
**Glacier Lilies Trip**  
 by Susan Spiller

Leaving Vernon at 8:30 am, nine of us in two vehicles made the rural, spring drive to Chase via Pillar Lake. There were no problems at the Adams Lake Band Office, where we each paid the \$5.00 fee and our drivers were issued vehicle permits.

We continued northwest a short distance along the gravel road towards Niskonlith Provincial Park. On our left, atop two power poles, were what looked like Osprey nests, but each had a Canada Goose sitting there!

From a distance we had seen a yellow glow on the hills, but as a first time visitor, I was absolutely in awe of the spectacle ahead of us, as we ascended the gentle climb. The Yellow Glacier Lilies were at their prime for as far as we could see. There were still a few Sagebrush Buttercups. The Saskatoons were out. Among

the bouquets of lilies were Chocolate Tips, Long-flowered Bluebells (*mertensia*), Shooting Star, Spring Beauty, Spring Gold and Large-fruited Desert-parsley (*lomatium*). Great photography opportunities.

Calling from the bushes were a pair of towhee and several other small birds, including meadowlark.

Looking down, across the farmland in the Thompson Valley, we had a leisurely lunch, counting the number of cars on the long freight trains snaking beside the river. There were butterflies around: Fritillary, Blues and a Morning Cloak.

It was warm and sunny as we made our way down through the flowers. Two Indian people were digging lilies. They roast the bulbs like potatoes. Careful to preserve this resource, they only harvest the larger bulbs and replant any smaller ones that are dug.

A big thank you to our leader, Margaret Hubble, for arranging the trip and sharing her knowledge of the plants.

**Thursday, April 22**  
**Middleton Mountain**  
 by Harold Sellers

Eight NONCers enjoyed this trip, led by Robyn. The weather ranged from pleasant to windy with brief and light rain. But the views were great, including lunch looking out over the Coldstream Valley.

Observations included: Birds - Red-tailed Hawks and young in nest, Western Meadowlark, Western Kingbird, American Goldfinch; Wildflowers - Upland Larkspur, Meadow Death-Camas, Field Pussytoes, Lemonweed, Spring Beauty, Old Man's Whiskers, Geyer's Biscuitroot, Chocolate Tips, Woodland Star and Saxifrage (species?). ❖

## NONC 2010 Sing-Along and More

by Joyce Hebbert

Twenty-three NONC members and one guest arrived at Kay's Place on Friday evening February 26<sup>th</sup> ready to Sing their Hearts Out. After a glass of punch or wine, they settled down to an evening of love songs – some about friendship, others love of place, and many the romantic type. Joyce Hebbert announced that the evening's music would be dedicated to the memory of Tom Speechley, whose happy smile and accordion had livened our sing-alongs in past years. Joyce and Kay Bartholomew shared the piano for the first half songs which were "old timeys" ranging from "Side by Side" and "You are my Sunshine" to lilting waltzes. Included in the latter were a tribute to the Okanagan ("In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree"), a Valentine tribute ("Let Me Call You Sweetheart") and an enthusiastic rendition of "Daisy, Daisy" (the men did verse one and the ladies gave their emphatic "answers.") Robyn Thornton added a special request "Pagan Love Song", recalling a favourite memory of Ester Williams backstroking her way through this song. NONC members were challenged to sing AND back stroke, which added both humour and exercise to the first half of music!

After a break to replenish glasses – and to watch the final minutes of the Men's Hockey Olympic playoff – the group gathered for the second half of music. This began with the MORE that had been promised in the news packet invitation. NONCers were treated to "The Desert Song" sung by an Arabian Princess (Robyn), a medley of love songs on the harmonica by Ray "Hot Lips" Arlt, an impersonation of Aldo Annie singing "I Cain't Say No" (Joyce) and the reincarnation of Elvis Presley singing his classis "Love Me Tender, Love Me True" (Denis Seymour). Denis stayed at the piano for the rest of the evening's songs, which ranged from Charleston rhythms ("Yes

Sir, That's My Baby") to beautiful love songs ("I Don't Know Why" and "Hey There"). The sing-along closed appropriately with "We'll Meet Again," followed by more drinks and a table laden with good food.



Denis continued to play at the piano and many people stayed to sing more request songs. Finally the stragglers left what had been an "Enchanted Evening" by the "Light of a Silvery Moon" (almost full that night) saying goodbye, "Till We Meet Again." ❖

## Bluebird Workshop

by Margaret Hubble

Sherry Linn, president of the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society, spoke at our Bluebird Workshop on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a great turnout of about 25 people to hear Sherry share some tips and experiences, as well as answer many questions.

Kay Bart was our gracious host and arranged for an abundant and delicious lunch of soups, sandwiches and cakes. Despite the good turnout, we couldn't eat it all!

Thanks to Margaret Hubble for organizing the workshop and for coordinating NONC's many bluebird trail monitors. It appears we have a good number of volunteers this year, but if you are interested, contact Margaret.

Here are some of the tips and comments by Sherry. You can learn even more by visiting the North American Bluebird Society website at [www.NABluebirdSociety.org](http://www.NABluebirdSociety.org).

- ❖ There are many styles of nest boxes, but they will either have a hole entry or a slot entry.
- ❖ Sherry has found no preference by bluebirds for one type of entry over the other.
- ❖ Two boxes may be paired, spaced apart about 15 ft and the openings facing different directions. Tree swallows and bluebirds can be neighbours when the swallows discourage other swallows from moving into the neighbouring box.
- ❖ Wrens can be encouraged to move on if you discover their stick nests before they build the nest cup. Just remove the material. Wrens will often put building into other nearby boxes, but only nest in one.
- ❖ Bluebirds frequently return each year to the same area and even the same box.
- ❖ Banded bluebirds can be carefully picked up off the nest, the band read and recorded and the bird returned.
- ❖ Spacing of nest boxes for bluebirds has many opinions. Some recommend 300 meters, some 100 meters. But there have been successful cases of much less. Most important is that the bluebirds do not easily see their neighbours.
- ❖ It doesn't matter if the box is varnished or unfinished, but definitely do not apply finish on the inside.

- ❖ Old nesting material should be bagged and packed out of the area. Discarding it around the box could attract predators.
- ❖ Lifting the nesting material while the nest is in use, you can check for blow fly larvae. Simply scrape them out.
- ❖ Blow fly larvae are usually not harmful to the birds unless the nestlings are already weak for some other reason.
- ❖ Wasps might be found in the box. They don't harm the birds, but they can be troublesome for the monitor.
- ❖ Rubbing a bar of Ivory Soap on the box ceiling might help keep wasps away.
- ❖ When cleaning the box, you can give it a light spritz of weak bleach solution.
- ❖ Abandoned babies can be adopted out to another family if both broods are the same age. But be sure they have been abandoned!
- ❖ When the nestlings are nearing fledging (12-14 days old), don't open the box or they might escape and you'll never get them back in.
- ❖ Flickers can be discouraged by putting metal around the opening and installing a flicker nest box nearby. Installing a flicker box can also solve the problem if flickers are trying to build nests in your home!
- ❖ Male House Sparrows will kill bluebirds to take over a nest box. Remove their nests immediately if you find them.
- ❖ Two broods of bluebirds per year is normal and there can even be three. ❖

### **What's New at the Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary**

by Vivian Merchant

New caretakers of the sanctuary Aaron Deans and his wife Leisha Rosnau assumed their duties on April 1 and moved into the sanctuary after hard-working volunteers painted and cleaned. Aaron is a registered professional biologist performing ecological field research in the areas of critical wildlife habitat and fire ecology, and developing conservation and management plans for municipal and regional governments. The newspaper headlines tell us about his wife Leisha – “Vernon writer shortlisted for national poetry award”, “Writer returns to Roots”, and “Vernon writer takes up residency”, where residency refers to a “Writer-in-residence” at UBC Okanagan.

# Hummingbird Monitoring

by Gail Loughridge

Yes, its that time of the year again - HUMMINGBIRD BANDING AND MONITORING in the North Okanagan. What an exciting time of the year for us.

We are looking forward to the upcoming season – new forms, new tools and new people. We hope that you will decide to join us this year for a bigger and better banding season.

Our banding season starts on May 1, 2010 and ends July 31<sup>st</sup>. It's a short season but an intense one that is very rewarding.

We are looking for volunteers to join us and have some fun as well as participate in a North American scientific banding project. There are jobs other than banding – such as operating the trap (a skill), recording and monitoring hummingbird activity. We go out evenings as well as early morning and I think everyone has a great time.

Please contact Gail (250-545-7455 or [kalliope@shaw.ca](mailto:kalliope@shaw.ca)) if you wish any further information or wish to participate (part-time or full time).

## HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS

by Gail Loughridge

Soon the hummingbirds will be returning to the North Okanagan. Usually the first males are seen about April 10th. If you have never put out a feeder you might want to think about attracting these little birds to your yard.

### HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER SOLUTION

Sugar water is an important specific mixture. The experts tell us that four parts water to

one part white cane sugar is the best for a hummingbird. Anything stronger interferes with the birds' metabolism. And nothing but sugar can be used in a feeder. You can store unused syrup in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

### CLEANING FEEDERS

Keeping a hummingbird feeder clean is the first and foremost obligation that a person has when hanging up a feeder. If you are not prepared to follow the rigorous maintenance routine, perhaps you should reconsider hanging up a feeder.



Every filling, flush the feeder with hot tap water; a bottle brush can be very helpful. DO NOT USE SOAP - hummers apparently don't like the taste, and bleach will remove it if you have this problem. Visually

inspect the entire feeder for black mold; a bleach soak is the best way to remove mold. Discard any unconsumed sugar water - if the birds are not emptying your feeder between cleanings, throw it away or only partially fill your feeder every time. If the sugar solution in your feeder turns cloudy, it's spoiled and needs to be replaced. Any hummingbird solution left in a feeder for more than a week, and less than a week in the hot summer, will ferment and produce a fungus that can kill the hummingbird. Rinse well with running water and refill.

At least once a month, clean the feeder thoroughly with a solution of ¼ cup bleach to one gallon of water. Soak the feeder in this solution for one hour, and then clean with a bottle brush, removing any black mold. The little yellow bee stoppers must be removed and the stylized openings cleaned out as well as dirt does accumulate on the surface, and can lead to bacteria being transmitted to the bird..

Happy hummingbird watching. ❖