

# MUSKRAT EXPRESS

WILLIAMS LAKE FIELD NATURALISTS

MAY + JUNE 2017 NEWSLETTER

Celebrate  
CANADA



visit the  
mountains



Teapot Hike  
July 14-15



Play in the  
Puddles

Have a Happy  
SUMMER SEASON



The newsletter for the:  
Williams Lake Field Naturalists  
1305A Borland Road, Williams Lake BC, V2G 5K5

**Membership fees:** Family (\$30), single (\$25) or student (\$10) memberships can be mailed to the above address. Please complete the membership and waiver forms available at the Nature Centre (250) 398-8532, [muskratexpress@shaw.ca](mailto:muskratexpress@shaw.ca) or the web site below. For more information about the club please contact Fred McMechan at 392-7680 or e-mail [Fred\\_McMechan@telus.net](mailto:Fred_McMechan@telus.net)

**Williams Lake Field Naturalists Website** <http://www.williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca>  
**Scout Island Nature Centre Website** <http://www.scoutislandnaturecentre.ca>

**Executive of The Williams Lake Field Naturalists:** president Fred McMechan, vice president **Vacant**, secretary Ordell Steen, treasurer Katharine VanSpall and directors Nola Daintith, Cathy Koot, Peter Opie, Ray Hornby, Brian Chapman, Don Lawrence and Chris Coates



**Editors:** Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Your editors will be enjoying a well-deserved holiday during the next 2 months so expect your next edition of the newsletter in mid-September. If you have comments, suggestions or articles for the next Muskrat Express please contact Margaret Waring (398-7724), Jim Sims (296-3638) or e-mail us at

[muskratexpress@shaw.ca](mailto:muskratexpress@shaw.ca)



## Spring Yard and Garden Sale

By Margaret Waring

Thank you everyone for the help you provided and congratulations on your success. Our sale on May 6th this year earned \$1978. I think that could be a record for earnings. A student graduating from grade 12 at Lake City Secondary School in 2018 will receive a \$1000. bursary from the Williams Lake Field Naturalists. The rest goes toward school programs at Scout Island. I was at this year's graduation on Friday night June 9th and noted the announcement of our bursary to a student (Angela Melnay) in the 2017 graduating class.

For the sale on Friday and Saturday we had a set up crew and a clean up crew and cash desk operators and sale helpers as well as the donators and purchasers. We assisted with redistribution, in that we helped clear out some things from your homes and helped others find items they needed and wanted to take home.

Helpers included people who were not there like all the donators who dropped off items and without them the sale could not happen. Skye Raffard and Peter Opie brought their donations in before they went away. Also helping behind the scenes were Fred McMechan who went to the Naturalist AGM on the weekend, Kath Van Spall who prepared the float before she went away and Sue Hemphill who brought in donations and collected and stored goods from others as well as doing some on line advertising, a skill I have not yet learned. Juergen brought in an interesting variety of plants. Lake City Secondary School Green House program grew some great tomatoes, Marg Pulver always calls to offer her help. Three summer students and Chris and Ray Hornby and Lubna Khan helped set up. Slavka and Jackie helped set up too and then were back early the next day to see if we needed more help and to buy things too. We need to send a big thank you to the W.L. Garden Club. To support our sale the Garden Club brought in some plants and sent Pat and Deb Radolla! (they were a great resource sharing their plant knowledge). Rick Dawson and Rodger Hamilton were on the wheelbarrow crew and helped set up and clean up too. Bill Loyd came with lots of donations and a helping hand too. The cash desk, which you can picture, even if you were not there, was busy with line ups and it was run by Betty Donahue, Sandra Stuart and Joyce Lawrence. Barb Doedel (a work colleague of mine), Sean Donahue, Connie Hausler and Leo Rankin are all long time supporters and helpers for the sale. As well as a bit of work it was a fun and social event. Thank you to everyone, those I mentioned and those I might have forgotten and those who brought donations in and those who made purchases to take home. All were appreciated.

We sold tomato plants, trees and other plants, books and a giant bird cage, bird houses and bird feeders, muffins and cookies, tools and a wooden bench, tea sets and toys and lots more!

There was a Nature House wheelbarrow with an operating crew going steadily. They unloaded and brought goods into

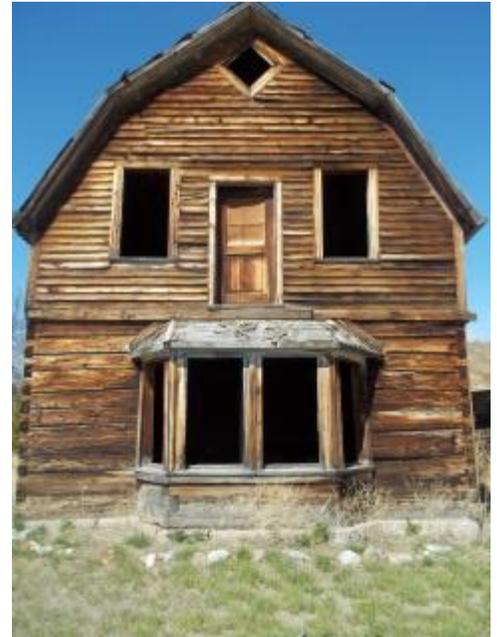
the Nature House to set up for the sale Friday afternoon. Saturday morning they were busy loading large items such as the popular manure bags from Rodger into buyer's cars. On Saturday afternoon the wheelbarrow and crew took left overs to vehicles which were delivered to the Salvation Army, Salt Jar, Share Shed and Rotary Book Sale Storage. I am sorry I was too busy and didn't take any pictures. Maybe I will remember next year. Mentioning next year reminds me to remind you to start collecting. Get a box and label it Scout Island Yard Sale and start to load it up for next year's sale!

## **Chilanko Forks Ranch**

By Margaret Waring

On the annual bird trip to Chilanko Marsh, in the afternoon we went over to see the buildings of the old ranch. Actually I think the principal goal was to add to the number of bird species found. As well as finding a few species to add to our list it was very interesting to listen to Karen Piffko and Kaye Stafford talk about the area and buildings. I asked if they would be able to do some research and gather information about the ranch which they referred to as the Knoll Place. Karen found information in Diana French's book "The Road Runs West."

Mr. and Mrs. Ole Nygaard, members of the Norwegian colony in Bella Coola, established the first ranch at Chilanko around the turn of the century. They sold it to Arthur and Anna Knoll in 1912. The Nygaards moved to Bella Coola and the Knolls moved from Bella Coola to the Chilanko Forks Ranch, where they made a large addition to the house.



In the early 1950's Arthur was still living there although his son (known as) Ollie (official name Alvis) actually owned it. Ollie had his headquarters across country at Chezacut.

In 1951 George and Jessie Powers sold their place at Charlotte Lake and moved to the Old Knoll Place at Chilanko. The property is now owned by the Nature Trust of BC and is managed by Ducks Unlimited. Much of the land is now flooded for the waterfowl reserve that we visit every year.

Thank you to Karen Piffko for gathering this information.



## **Notes from the Executive**

By Fred McMechan

- 1) The Scout Island Nature Centre Banquet took place on April 21 and was enjoyed by 115 people. The meal prepared by the United Church catering crew and the desserts by Joanne Wrights were delicious. Ken Wright, our guest speaker, gave an interesting presentation on his research on Blue Grouse. Thanks to all who came and supported this worthwhile event. The profit will be used to finance educational programs at the nature centre.
- 2) At the Nature Centre banquet Anna Roberts was recognized for her wonderful contributions over many years toward encouraging children and families to experience nature, informing them about our natural world and assisting in the operation of the Nature Centre. She received plaques from the City and our club. The plaques have been placed in the Nature House and the library has been named the "Anna Roberts Library". Jurgen Hornburg made an attractive sign to recognize Anna.
- 3) New attractive signs, to recognize the contributors for the construction of several structures at the Nature Centre, have been installed at each location. They include: 1) the board walkways on the Willow Trail and the Bulrush Trail. 2) the bridges on the Island Trail and the Otter Point Trail and 3) the sign kiosk at the Nature House parking lot.
- 4) The book, "Stepping into Nature, a Guide to the Williams Lake River Valley", written by Ordell Steen and Anna Roberts, has recently sold out. We decided to place an order for this book. The book will be available still at the Open Book and the Nature House

- 5) We are considering the planning for a BC Nature Camp at Tatlayoko Lake in September of 2018. We had a successful camp in 2015 which had a waiting list. We have received a request from BC Nature to host a similar camp next year



### Scout Island Nature Centre

By Sue Hemphill

#### Spring News from Scout Island Nature Centre

It is definitely spring at the Nature Centre and the Nature K students are busy enjoying it. Here they are preparing their new garden beds. Thank-you to Rodger Hamilton for building the frames for the protective netting that Arnold Lucier (summer maintenance worker) is applying this week. We don't want the deer eating the food before the Nature K students get it.



Here they are trying out their new back packs as they explore the far island. It is amazing what they find every day to talk and write about. The baby mouse trapped in the mud kitchen sink was a big excitement!

Our two UBC Teacher Candidates, Marshall Hacker and Jenna Dur, that worked with us from April 24-May 12 were kept very busy helping with outdoor programs we are doing with all of the Marie Sharpe classes in the River Valley. Marshall used his trades skills and added painting walls and music stands (instruments to come) to the Nature Kindergarten yard to the brand new fence (Thanks to Fred, Rodger, Peter, and Ray) and taught the Nature K students how to saw and hammer.

Three brand new summer staff joined us on May 2. I have been very busy teaching them all there is to know at the Nature Centre. Fortunately, they are fast learners and were able to step into help with the visit from the Lieutenant Governor, Judith Guichon (the second day they were here). This event went very smoothly thanks to the Grade 7 Outdoor Ed students sitting with their little buddies from Nature K and then helping to lead the outdoor centres that the dignitaries visited. Now summer staff are busy leading classes at schools, the Nature Centre, and the River Valley, and helping with salmon fry releases.

#### Our Scout Island Nature Centre Staff

Gabriele Lachapelle is going into her third year as a biomedical student at UNBC and is so excited to be a part of the summer staff at Scout Island Nature Centre. She is working as one of the teacher naturalists with a

specialty in plants and marsh. Gabriele is thankful for the chance to be working outside and sharing her knowledge with younger students.

Sarah Dickens is heading into her second year as a n International Relations major at Trinity Western University, and is passionate about hiking in nature, working with people, and learning new things. She is teaching for the majority about land invertebrates and is looking forward to the energy and excitement of Scout Island in the summer.

William Newberry is going into his third year as a physics student at Simon Fraser University, and is ecstatic to be spending his summer outside teaching about nature.

Outside of the physics lab, William loves to ski, bike, and play music. He enjoys learning about and observing birds, and is passionate about sharing this excitement with classes.



**William, Sarah and Gabriele**

## Our View of the Night Sky – Summer 2017.



**By Steve Capling**

### Planet Review

Mercury is difficult to see at this time because of the low angle of the ecliptic. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, Mercury is just below the star Regulus in Leo very low on the west horizon at dusk. Look for it about a binocular field of view west of the crescent moon.

Venus shines brightly in the early dawn sky low in the east-north-east.

Mars is out of sight during July and August.

Jupiter is conspicuous in the south-west at dusk.

Saturn rises at sunset in the south evening sky and is due south in the middle of the night. Its rings are tilted so they provide a great view through a telescope!

### Sun

Note there will be a solar eclipse on August 21 this summer that passes through Oregon and then across the US. If you haven't yet observed a solar eclipse this is one of the closest to us there will be in the near future!

### Moon

New Moon - June 23<sup>rd</sup>, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 21<sup>st</sup>.

Full moon - June 9<sup>th</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup>, August 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Summer Solstice** is on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Meteor Showers

The Perseid meteor shower peaks on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately the moon will be relatively bright so fainter meteors will be hard to see.

**Evening Sky Map** – courtesy of Skymaps.com.

For a printable sky chart go to this web site - Skymaps.com/downloads.html - and scroll down the center of the page to the download button. “June 2017: Northern Edition (PDF)”. At the end of the month it changes to show the next month’s chart.

The Skymaps chart also has a useful list of what is visible with the eye, binoculars and telescopes.

## **We missed your Member’s Moment!**

It has been a challenge trying to get you to send us your special photos. In the past we have had some great photos sent to us. We would love to get more but our appeals are not working. In spite of all the amazing photos that you have been taking this spring we have not received a single photo and story for publication in the newsletter.

“Member’s Moment” is an opportunity for you to share a special scene, plant, animal, bird or outdoor activity that you have enjoyed and photographed here in the Cariboo Chilcotin. A chance for you to encourage other members to get outdoors and find their own special moments close to home and perhaps share them with all of us. For each newsletter the editors will select one or two photos for inclusion in the newsletter based on the quality of the photo as well as the interesting paragraph you must provide. We will save all submitted unused moments in hopes they may find a place in a future edition. Please email your full resolution photo and paragraph to the [muskratexpress@shaw.ca](mailto:muskratexpress@shaw.ca).

## **Remaining 2017 Field trips**

### **Asbestos Pits**

*Wednesday evening June 28<sup>nd</sup> (Leader Peter Opie 392-1440)*

Meet at SINC at 7:00 pm to carpool; wear your hiking boots. We'll drive to the top to view the landscape and enjoy the birds. Plan to explore interesting features in the vicinity including the "Asbestos Pits" and associated plant communities.

### **Teapot Mountain Hike and Camp**

*Friday July 14<sup>th</sup> to Saturday July 15<sup>th</sup> (Leader Paula Laita 250 305-8095)*

Friday: leave in the morning, drive to the trailhead, have lunch, hike up to the cabin, overnight.

Saturday: hike up to the alpine, ridge to the top and explore around, back to the cabin, pick up backpacks, down to the car. Stop at the Horsefly waterfalls for a swim and drive to the Arts on the Fly in Horsefly. Due to the nature of the trip and the possibility of alternative options **it is imperative that you pre-register for this trip by contacting Paula.**

### **Sheep Flats, Churn Creek Protected Area – hike**

*Saturday, September 23 (Leaders: Jim Young 398-7987 and Ordell Steen 398-5017)*

This is a hike to a seldom visited grassland bench on the north side of Churn Creek near the western limits of the protected area. It provides great views of the upper Churn Creek canyon and examples of good condition grasslands. We will see at least one rare plant species and abundant sign of bighorn sheep. We will access the flats from the Gang Ranch/Blackwater Lake area on a guide outfitters trail which is quite steep in several sections through the forest above the flat. We will return the same way for a total distance of 6-7 km and an elevation rise of about 350 m on the hike back to the vehicles. Bring lots of water and a lunch. Meet at the parking lot at the “Y” by the A&W at 7:00 a.m. This will be a joint trip with the Friends of Churn Creek.

### **Junction Sheep Range**

*Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup> (Leader Fred McMechan 392-7680)*

Meet at Scout Island at 8:00am. Bring a lunch, water bottle and your binoculars for this annual day long drive and hike into the park. This will be at the peak of the California Big-horned Sheep rut so look forward to seeing the sheep and perhaps you will be lucky and see or hear some head-butting.

# Nature Fun Scout Island Nature Centre



Come and Play with us  
and Explore Nature!  
Children who play outdoors are found to make friends more easily, concentrate better, and suffer less from depression and anxiety.

July 10- August 11  
Mon. Tues. Thur. Fri. 9:30-11:30 or  
1-3 Mon. Tues. Thurs.  
for Ages 4-8  
\$12 per session

Art in Nature Adventures-- Wednesdays for Ages 8-13  
8:30-4:30pm (\$25)

Art activities, exploring, observing, games...



The cost of these programs has been kept low through support from the Canada Summer Jobs Program, Province of BC, and volunteers from the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

For more information and details of activities or to register for programs  
Call 398 8532 or  
scoutisland@shaw.ca

**Go Out and Play, Smell a Flower, Touch a Dragon Fly, Eat a Berry, Listen to a Bird**