

MUSKRAT EXPRESS

WILLIAMS LAKE FIELD NATURALISTS
JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER





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

Membership fees: Family (\$35), single (\$30) 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 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

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: presidential Team Margaret Waring (Chairperson), Don Lawrence (Scout Island affairs) and Ordell Steen (Communications/liaison), secretary Nola Daintith, treasurer Katharine VanSpall and directors Peter Opie, Ray Hornby, Jean Oke, Cathie Hamm, Sean Donahue, Lara Roorda and Fred McMechan



Editors: Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Please expect your next edition of the newsletter near the end of September. If you have comments, suggestions or articles for the next Muskrat Express please contact Margaret Waring (398-7724), Jim Sims (778 764-2752) or e-mail us at muskratexpress@shaw.ca



Field Trip

Grasslands and Wetlands of Bechers Prairie

Sunday, July 9 (*led by Ordell Steen 250-398-5017*)

Becher's Prairie is a provincially significant landscape which supports a large variety of wetlands and grasslands, some unique to the Cariboo-Chilcotin. The wetlands are very important waterfowl habitat although this trip will miss the spring migration peak. Depending on road conditions, we will drive west from the Meldrum Creek Road to the road from Riske Creek, stopping for short hikes to explore plants and wildlife of Becher's Prairie wetlands, lightly grazed grasslands, and small stands of aspen. Bring a lunch, water, and appropriate clothing. Meet at Nature House parking lot at 7:30 a.m.

Scout Island Nature Center Banquet

By Margaret Waring

Friday Evening April 21st saw the return of our fund-raising banquet. It was a successful and enjoyable event at St. Andrews United Church Hall. We enjoyed viewing silent auction items and socializing. Thank you to the caterers of the United Church who provided appetizers and dinner followed by Joanne Wright's famous desserts. The traditional book door prizes were awarded and we had an informative and entertaining presentation by Frank Ritcey, "the Outdoor Guy" sometimes on CBC radio. Thank you to all who contributed to make this a positive, successful evening. A special thank you to Joanne Wright who donated her time and all the ingredients to create the delicious desserts.

Yard Sale Report

By Betty Donahue

The annual Scout Island Yard sale on May 13th was another success, raising \$1109.80. These funds will be directed towards a \$1500 bursary for a student pursuing studies in biology or environmental sciences. The warm sunny weather drew crowds of eager bargain hunters. There were lots of treasures on display for all ages of shoppers. The plants are always a big attraction. Thank you for all the donations of gently used items. It is great to see so many items finding a new home. Leftover items from the yard sale were donated to the Salvation Army and Caroline's Closet Thrift Store and books were donated to the Rotary



Club for future book sales. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with set up, manning the tables during the sale and aiding in clean up.

Field Trip Reports

Alkali Lake Field Trip April 24th

by Sue Correia, new and enthusiastic member of the Naturalists

What a fantastic trip and a fantastic group! Plus, we had fantastic pictures to see what these magnificent finds REALLY looked like...thank you Lubna! Congratulations on getting a photo of that beautiful ruby crowned kinglet.

With the late arrival of spring, we were concerned to see ice covering many of the ponds on the drive out to Alkali Lake. What a treat to see the open water and variety of birds and waterfowl at Alkali Lake. We had closeup views of pelicans and even found a surf scoter hiding amongst the many coots. The group also saw sandhill cranes and a couple of long billed curlews on the drive out. Fred, Maria and I also saw our first black bear at Springhouse on the return trip.

The spotting scope was very cool but...I will definitely be practising my bino skills before the next outing. Thanks everybody for the adventure.

Scout Island Field Trip Report (May 14th)

Submitted by Betty Donahue

On Mother's Day, 7 eager naturalists met at Scout Island for a birding hike. Although many of the waterfowl had already moved on since the ice melted, we still spotted Canada Geese, American Wigeons, Mallards, Loons, Red necked Grebes and Northern Shovelers. Lubna's sharp eyes spotted a belted kingfisher near the old bridge. The Red Winged Blackbirds and Yellow Headed Blackbirds were raising a ruckus in the marsh. An elusive Sora was heard, but stayed hidden in the reeds. Rufous Hummingbirds, Chickadees, Tree Swallows and Song Sparrows were the main small birds of note. Four Pelicans were spotted flying overhead. The Painted Turtles loved the warm weather. We saw at least 20 turtles on loafing logs in the lake at the entry to the causeway and another 15 in "Turtle Bay", off the Willow Trail.

Each visit to Scout Island is unique and will yield different birds and waterfowl. It is truly a gem!

Chilanko Marsh Field Trip Report (May 20)

by Betty Donahue

For almost 40 years, Jim Sims has been leading an annual naturalist field trip to Chilanko Marsh on the May long weekend. 17 birders and two very energetic dogs participated in this year's event. With lots of binoculars and two spotting scopes trained on the marsh, ponds, trees and skies, we identified 84 different species of birds and waterfowl. It is amazing to watch some of the more experienced birders able to identify various bird species by sound alone. Those of us who are more novice birders are reliant on the Merlin app on our phone to confirm the various bird songs, but what a wonderful learning tool! Loyd and Michaela explored the ponds with a canoe, while the rest of us searched the marshes from shore.

After birding, the group gathered at Tern Inn, Jim's place on Eagle Lake. Despite the hot, sunny weather, none of us felt brave enough to swim in chilly Eagle Lake! We enjoyed a great potluck supper, while being treated to closeup views of Red-naped sapsuckers nesting in the aspen tree just off the deck and nuthatches,



Two Intense Birders



chickadees and hummingbirds at the feeders. After a good night of sleep in this quiet paradise, Jim made his famous pancake breakfast for the group.

Despite the cooler, unsettled weather on Sunday, the group ventured off on a hike to explore around Sapeye Lake. Loyd took some amazing photos of a flycatcher devouring a whole dragonfly! Sapeye Lake lived up to its reputation as a good fishing lake as we watched some fishermen reeling in fish right from the shore. We enjoyed a picnic lunch on the scenic shore before departing for home.

Thank you, Jim, for your many years of leading this great trip and opening your home to your friends for the weekend. Much appreciated.

Walker Valley Field Trip Report (June 4)

by Betty Donahue

On June 4th, six intrepid birders set off to explore the bucolic Walker Valley near 108 Mile. Perhaps it should not have been advertised in the field trip list as “bucolic” as one participant was heard to comment “What does bucolic mean? It sounds like a disease I don’t want to get!” It was a great day with sun and a light breeze to keep the pesky mosquitoes at bay. This area can often be muddy as it is a wetland, but as there had been no rain for several weeks, we had no difficulty keeping our feet dry. We did a leisurely 5 km walk along marshes and ponds, through lightly forested sections and through some grasslands. There are no steep climbs. Although there were relatively few forest birds, there was an abundance of waterfowl. We were delighted to view a total of 61 species. This is an amazing number of feathered friends!



Garter Snake and frog
Photo by Lubna Khan

The most exciting thing happened soon after we started down the trail. I nearly stepped on a garter snake! After an involuntary shriek and a quick jump back, we all gathered to observe the snake. It was in the process of consuming a live frog!

What do Garter Snakes Eat? 12+ Foods in Their Diet, written by Hailey Pruett and posted on a-z-animals.com, was my source for this information about garter snakes. Garter snakes feast only on live prey. This includes rodents, frogs, insects, small birds, other snakes, small fish, lizards and earthworms. They will occasionally eat eggs from smaller birds and reptiles. Garter snakes are nonvenomous and, due to their small size, they cannot constrict their prey. They are cunning hunters that tend to ambush small, weak animals that they can swallow whole. Humans need not fear a garter snake.

On the return to town, we drove through Mission Road in the hopes of seeing Bobolinks (a small black and yellow bird) and were not disappointed. They are often spotted in hayfields and we also found some near the bridge at the south end of Mission Road.

Walker Valley is a lovely place to explore and is easily accessible from Highway 97. We accessed the area via Tatton Station Road, just south of 108 Mile. The roads are all paved and there is a small parking area at the end of Watson Lake.

Bluebirds and Other Creatures Along the Mission Road

By Loyd Csizmadia

Bluebird Program Co-ordinator for the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

A handful of Naturalists spent a pleasant evening on Mission Road, the site of Don Lawrence’s Mountain Bluebird route. Don graciously offered his route as an outdoor classroom so that more members could learn about the Bluebird Program. I was asked to be the teacher. How could I resist!



Don Lawrence Records Breeding Bird Data



What Will Kris Discover Inside of This Box?

When Bluebirds are less than four days old, the parents feed them caterpillars and soft insects, but most of the young in Don's nests were 7 to 17 days old. These birds are ready for hard-bodied insects like grasshoppers, and they can eat a lot! Each bird in the nest requires three feedings per hour beginning at dawn and ending at dusk. If the sun rises at 4AM and sets around 10PM, that is 54 feedings per bird per day. With so many grasshoppers available this year, survival rates should be high (unless you are a grasshopper).

As we gathered data at each station, I shared bits of knowledge about Mountain Bluebirds. For example, most of those fattened nestlings will have fledged by the middle of June. Once out of the nest, they learn to feed themselves. Considering that the days are getting longer, the weary parents are probably quite relieved. So, what do these fledglings do once they are independent? They help mom and dad! The fledgling period usually takes between three and four weeks. During this period, the adult male looks after the young while the female lays a second clutch of eggs. Once the second brood is ready for food, the juveniles assist mom and dad with the feeding.



Amy & Michaela observing a Bobolink

Reading excerpts from an email sent by Anna Roberts in 2012, I opened with a brief history. The Bluebird Program officially began in 1978 when the Williams Lake Field Naturalists received 50 cents from the Department of Agriculture for every nest box installed throughout the Chilcotin grasslands. After volunteers constructed 474 houses and established six routes, 18 Naturalists maintained the nest boxes and gathered data. The stated objective of the Program was to biologically control grasshoppers with Mountain Bluebirds, thereby eliminating the practice of spraying pesticides. Today, 32+ volunteers maintain over 1000 boxes on 31 routes. Do the grasshoppers even stand a chance?

Judging by the hordes of tiny hoppers on Don's route this year, they appear to be fighting back. Fortunately, his bird boxes are full of hungry nestlings. After the history lesson, Don and I demonstrated how to open the boxes and gather the data. Don has around 60 boxes on his route. Some were empty, but most contained what one would expect to find on June 6th: clutches of six Tree Swallow eggs, several nests with Tree Swallow hatchlings less than three days old, and Mountain Bluebird nests with four to six half-to nearly full-grown young crowded together in a grassy cup no larger than the breast of the mother who built it.



These Mountain Bluebird Nestlings are 9 to 10 Days Old

Don's route begins near the Borland Creek bridge and ends near Highway 97, just about the full length of the Mission Road. If you are familiar with Mission Road, you probably already know that we didn't spend the entire field trip opening and closing Bluebird boxes. There were plenty of distractions that sent our crew scurrying to vehicles for binoculars and cameras. Many colourful characters, such as Bobolinks, Orioles, Yellow-Headed Blackbirds, and Tanagers, enhanced our outdoor classroom. Wilson's Snipe serenaded us in their eerie winnowing way, and a couple of Nighthawks got our fingers pointing skyward. Just when I thought the evening couldn't get any better, a large black bear crossed the road very near to the group peering through their binoculars in the opposite direction. The word "bear" had the desired effect.

Thank you, Don, for sharing your route with us. As the sun set on the classroom, I felt very pleased with our lesson.

Clyde Mountain, Churn Creek (June 18)**By Peter Opie**

On Fathers' Day six of us set out for Churn Creek for a nature hike. Although cool in the morning, the weather for hiking turned out to be delightful; warm sun and a cool wind from the north. We stopped at Alkali Lake on the way to see what birds might be found; however, no pelicans and few waterfowl. We did stop at Brown Lake in Churn to find maybe four dozen pelicans there. On another trip Tuesday, I counted over sixty pelicans! We then had a leisurely hike from the calving barns down to the lower grassland bench



stopping to spy on birds and pollinators. It was interesting to notice how the wildfire had chosen patches to burn and how those sites were recovering. We had a great view of the BC Cattle Co lands across the Fraser that were recently transferred to the Stswecem'c-Xgat'tem First Nation and had some discussion about the conservation covenant proposed there. There were lots of lovely wildflowers; however no elusive indigo bunting or Lewis' woodpecker. However, a black-chinned hummingbird was spotted at Gang Ranch.

Peter Opie

Asbestos Pits (June 21)**By Peter Opie**

Due to a late afternoon thunderstorm, no hikers came out for the summer solstice hike. I was there in case anyone showed up and as the weather was sunny and warm, by 6:30, Skye, Daisy and I walked part way up. It was a delightful evening with scented blossoms blooming in the woods and birds sweetly singing. We heard a barred owl. We must try to do that hike again sometime.

Notes from the Director's Meetings.**By Margaret Waring Co-president**

June 20th was hopefully our last meeting until fall. Business does not stop over the summer and we keep in contact with smaller gatherings and email messaging.

An exciting happening at the June meeting was the introduction of Megan Taylor our future new Executive Director for Scout Island Nature Centre. Look for more information in our next/fall newsletter. I anticipate Megan will provide some excellent and interesting programs as well as skillful and enthusiastic leadership.

Planning is occurring for Trail building and the creation of some outdoor roof shelters. Pile driving for the posts for the Otter Point trail is scheduled for early September.

Weed management needs helpers.

A leader is needed to guide the replacement of the edges along the trails on the island. If you are interested, please contact Don Lawrence or Sue Hemphill.

We are looking into arranging fall evening programs.

We always have opportunities that require volunteers and supporters.

Check out the newsletter articles that were contributed by members to learn more about club activities and events. Think about sending in a picture and story for a future newsletter.

Enjoy the fascinating outdoors, in your back yard or garden or consider some summer field trips.

As always thank you very much to all the wonderful volunteers contributing their time and support.

Plans for the Removal of Invasives at Scout Island (July to the end of September)

By Fred McMechan

Please consider volunteering to help with the removal of invasives during this period of time

Fred McMechan will act as the coordinator for this project

He plans to send weekly emails to provide information,

Phone Fred at 250 392 7680 for additional information

There will be two days weekly to remove invasives, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings; the times each day will be 8 am to 10 am (please note that we have changed from Thursday to Wednesday because several volunteers are busy on Thursday.) We will pick up disposal bags from the Regional District office each day and filled bags will be taken to the landfill site.

Proposed schedule showing the days and the areas to be covered:

- 1) 2 days (July 4/5: both sides of the causeway
- 2) 2 days (July 11/12: north trail
- 3) 3 days (July 18/19/25: bulrush trail both sides to and including Otter Point
- 4) 2 days (July 26, Aug 1: bulrush trail between Otter Point and the dock
- 5) 4 days (Aug, 2,8/9/15 bridge to DU observation deck
- 6) 3 days (Aug 16/22/23 butterfly trail between bridge and parking lot at boat launch
- 7) 2 days (Aug 29/30 along edge of north side of picnic site
- 8) 4 days (Sept. 5/6/12/13 willow trail
- 9) 4 days (Sept 19/20 /26/27 island trail between picnic site and bridge (includes removal of nightshade)
- 10) 2 days (Late in Sept. island trail, on east island

If you wish to remove invasives at other times you are welcome to do so

Scout Island Nature Centre

By Summer Staff-Cleary Manning

The past few months have been busy at the Scout Island Nature Centre. The summer staff have been leading programs specializing in a range of topics such as plants and pollinators, bugs, amphibians and reptiles, and the marsh and ocean. While most of these programs take place at the nature centre, the staff also travels to schools in the community. They have brought programs to 100 Mile House, Tatla Lake, Alkali Lake and the community forest.

Students get the opportunity to experience nature up close. They learn how to observe and appreciate nature by watching and even touching. This is a photo of students observing aquatic invertebrates that they caught in the marsh.



Meet your new SINC Executive Director

Megan Taylor

Greetings fellow nature enthusiasts! My name is Megan and I am so delighted to be Scout Island Nature Centre's new hire as Executive Director in training. Although I've only just started, the buzz of activity at Scout Island is infectious!

I'm a new transplant to BC and I am so happy to call Williams Lake my home. Having originally come from Ontario where I did my B.Sc. (Biology) and M.Sc. research (Entomology), I moved to the US where I conducted my Ph.D. research (Entomology), specifically, honey bee reproduction and genetics. I then moved to New Zealand for several years and worked in private industry. Although I enjoyed my time overseas, it

was time to come home and find a role where I could feel good about my job at the end of the day, knowing I was contributing something to my community.

I've loved insects, nature, and science since I was a child and was fortunate to have parents that supported and nurtured that innate love of the natural world. I truly believe kids are scientists at heart – but too often kids lose interest in outside play and exploration. However, having a centre like this is an incredible resource for kids and adults alike.

Scout Island is an absolute gem. A little oasis amongst the bustle of the city, providing the community with nature education or a place to just take a break from the electronic world, observe and learn from the natural world that surrounds us.

As I learn about the fascinating history of Scout Island and its metamorphosis from First People's home to its current state of Nature Centre, it is truly an honour and a privilege to be part of the Scout Island Nature Centre team. I have a lot to learn and I'm so looking forward to this journey together.

And to Sue Hemphill: Your commitment, passion, and drive has made the Nature Centre what it is today. I can only imagine how hard it is to step back, wondering if you've found the right person for the role. The fact that you're willing to stay on and mentor me through this transition, is testament to your commitment and love of this place. Thank you Sue.

Plants of Scout Island Nature Centre

Cilcel, Common Silverweed

(*Potentilla anserina*)

By Ordell Steen

Then we see a plant in flower, we may enjoy its beauty or perhaps consider its role in the ecosystem and its possible use by wildlife. One plant recently mentioned to me as forming a good ground cover to limit weed invasion on Scout Island is common silverweed, known to the Secwepemc as *cilcel*. On the west end of the island, near the Nekwu7sem bridge and along the trail to the waterfowl-viewing platform, it forms carpets which nearly completely cover the ground on moist soils. These sites are



typical of where the species grows – moist areas near the edge of lakes and wetlands. Only basal leaves occur on the stems so it remains low-growing, forming a cover like a blanket. Each leaf of the plant is formed of up to 21 separate leaflets, arranged on both sides of a central axis. It is called silverweed because the leaves, at least the lower surfaces, are silky grey-hairy. Sometimes, as is common on Scout Island, the upper surface is nearly green and sparsely hairy but the lower surfaces always show silver. The flowers appear early in the season, often in early May and are bright yellow. They occur singly on leafless stalks. It is a plant to watch for in the spring.

A striking feature of silverweed is its strawberry-like stolons or runners extending outward over the surface of the soil. The stolons produce clusters of leaves and roots at nodes, spaced every few centimeters.

Indigenous people recognized and used many of the plants which occur on Scout Island for food, medicine, or material. *Cilcel* or common silverweed is no exception. It is written that large quantities were often

gathered in the fall. The Secwepemc and other Interior indigenous people ate the strawberry-like stolons fresh or cooked by roasting, probably by pit-cooking. Some people apparently dried the stolons for winter storage. The stolons are said to have a good but somewhat bitter taste, much like potatoes. We will try them some day.

Bluebird Program Update: June 15, 2023

By Loyd Csizmadia

Bluebird Program Coordinator for the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

The summer solstice is just around the corner. By June 21st, most first broods of Mountain Bluebirds will have fledged, and the Tree Swallows will soon follow suit. Once out of the nest, juvenile Bluebirds learn to feed themselves. The fledgling period takes between three and four weeks. During this time, the adult male usually looks after the young while—conditions permitting-- the female lays a second clutch of eggs. Once the second brood is ready for food, the juveniles often assist mom and dad with the feeding. By mid-July or a little later, the two adults and the two broods leave the area as a family and join a post-breeding flock. According to Myrna Pearman in her 2005 booklet *Mountain Bluebird Trail Monitoring Guide*, where this large flock goes and why it forms is still a mystery (p. 13). In fact, she says that “much about the life cycle and natural history of the Mountain Bluebird ...is still unknown” (p. 1). Hopefully the data we are collecting in the Cariboo-Chilcotin will lead to a better understanding of Mountain Bluebirds.

June the 4th was an ideal day to gather nest box data on Becher's Prairie. A brisk breeze kept the mosquitos away, the temperature hovered around 20 degrees Celsius, the lighting was perfect for photography, and there were birds all around us. Vesper Sparrows in particular-- which can be identified by their pinkish bill, bold white eye-ring, and white outer tail feathers--were unusually abundant throughout our Becher's Bluebird route. Michaela and I observed them clinging to stalks of grass, perching on strands of barbed wire, chasing each other in the sky, and brooding on nests. On three occasions that I am aware of, we stepped dangerously close to well-hidden nests, nearly crushing the clutches of whiteish eggs covered with purplish-brown blotches. I paused to photograph one nest that contained four eggs. I also snapped a few photos of the many, many Vespers that I had to quit counting. For the first time in my memory, there were more Vesper Sparrows than mosquitos on Becher's Prairie!



Vesper Sparrow Nest

Adult Vesper Sparrow

There were a few other “firsts” during this year's Breeding Bird Survey: my first banded Mountain Bluebird, my first encounter with live Deer Mice in a nest box, and my first observation of a Tree Swallow brooding Mountain Bluebird eggs.

The banded bird is a female. Unfortunately, I only discovered that she was banded while viewing my photographs. In my photos, there are two yellow on the right leg and one metal over a brown band on the left. Even though I can't read the number on the metal band, I will report this sighting to Canada's National Wildlife Research Center: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/bird-banding/program-overview-contact-information.html>. Sandy Proulx also suggested that I contact Karen Wiebe and Russ Dawson. Both of these birding experts have banded in the Cariboo. I am very glad I did.

Karen Wiebe, recently retired from the University of Saskatchewan, is the bander of my bird. In 2021, she banded a yearling breeder which eventually fledged six nestlings. What amazed me is that I photographed this female very near where she was banded! She is now a third-year breeder and has likely been returning to the same box since 2021. At the time of my photo, her nest contained two unhatched eggs and three seven-day-old nestlings. Thanks to banding studies in Canada and the USA, we expect that adult female Mountain Bluebirds which survive migration will use the same nest box year after year, and that their average breeding age is two. Three and four-year-olds are less common, and five-year-olds are quite rare unless raised in captivity (M. Pearman, *Mountain Bluebird Trail Monitoring Guide*, p. 9). Will my banded bird make it back for a fourth year? Thanks to the Karen Wiebe's bands, I will be watching for her arrival.



Banded Female Mountain Bluebird



Deer Mouse Cowers in the Corner

My first encounter with Deer Mice was a bit of a shock. It is not unusual for rodents to occupy a box, but this has never happened on my route. In fact, I expected a Tree Swallow nest, since two had been trying to enter the box upon my arrival. Imagine how startled I was to discover two grey, whiskered noses twitching nervously. My guess is that they had been defending the entrance against the persistent swallows. Both mice retreated when I appeared, so I snapped a picture of one frightened creature cowering in the upper corner, and then--with some misgivings--I closed the face-board and made the entrance

inaccessible to Swallows and Bluebirds alike. It was an old, discarded box that I had leaned against a dead tree. Let the mice have it!

Discovering two Mountain Bluebird eggs nestled between six Tree Swallow eggs is something I have not seen, even after 35 years of managing the same route. Of course, the bluebird eggs are most likely infertile, but what if they are not? Will the Tree Swallows raise them?

A fellow Blue-Birder with many years of experience enjoyed a similar discovery on one of his routes. After the female Bluebird died, Tree Swallows took over the box and constructed a nest on top of her six eggs. It appears that one egg surfaced somehow, and then hatched along with the Swallows. Interestingly, the male Bluebird had not abandoned the nest box. In fact, he helped feed the five Swallows and one Mountain Bluebird inside. When the single Bluebird fledged, he then guided it into the forest away from danger. So, stay tuned! I hope to re-open my "special" nest box near the end of June. Hopefully I will have an interesting story to share.



Two Mountain Bluebird Eggs in an Active Tree Swallow Nest

By the way, I would really appreciate a copy of any breeding data from this year or any other year. And, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at lmccsiz@gmail.com.
Happy Summer 😊

Remaining Field Trips

Flowering Plants of Scout Island Nature Centre #3

Tuesday evening August 1 (*leader: Ordell Steen, 250-398-5017*)

Meet at Scout Island Nature House parking lot at 6:00 p.m. for an evening walk on Nature Centre trails to discover and identify plant species that are flowering or fruiting. Please bring a hand lens, magnifying glass and any plant guides you wish to use. This will be the third of three evening walks to record changes in plant species that are in flower.

Koster (China) Lake, Churn Creek

Sunday, 10 September (*Peter Opie 392-1440*)

With the Friends of Churn, we will hike from Blackdome Road. A moderate hike will take us through forest and grassland to Koster lake, a reservoir created by the damming of Little Churn Creek and diverting the water into Koster Creek by Chinese in the 19th century. Bring good boots, a hat, water and lunch. For carpooling we will convene at the wye parking lot west of the A&W at 7:00 am. Otherwise meet at the kiosk on Empire Valley Road at 9:00 am. Expect to return to Williams Lake by 5:00.

Junction Sheep Range

Saturday October 28th (*Leaders Loyd Csizmadia & Michaela Waterhouse 250-398-5754*)

Meet at Scout Island at 8:00am. Bring a lunch, a thermos of warm liquid or a water bottle, and your binoculars for this annual day-long drive and hike into the park. Dress warmly and wear sturdy hikers. 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.

Member's Moment from Lubna & Betty



Mother's Day

On Mother's Day, moms everywhere were being celebrated by their families. That day at Scout Island, we saw a flotilla of young goslings being closely protected by their parents.

"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. A special thanks to Lubna and Betty for their entry.