

Williams Lake Field Naturalists Field Trips for 2025

Annual Chilanko Marsh Field Trip May 17th to 19th

(Leader Jim Sims: (778)746-2752 or smedleysims@gmail.com)

On Saturday we will conduct an annual bird species count at Chilanko Marsh. Please allow for a 2-hour drive and follow the wildlife viewing signs on the next right after the Puntzi Lake turnoff (approx. 200 km from Williams Lake). Please arrive at the tanker base by 9:00 am. After the walk around the marsh you are welcome to join the party for a pot-luck supper and spend the night at Jim's home (Tern Inn) at Eagle Lake. Sunday morning you will be treated to Jim's famous Tern Inn Pancakes. There is limited room in the home and cabin so you might be more comfortable in a camper or tent. On Sunday there will be another walk and day of birding at one of many interesting nearby locations. Before you head back to town on Monday we will offer a shorter morning walk at another site.

Balsamroot Flower Tour near Farwell Canyon. Saturday May 24

(Leaders: Peter Opie, 250-392-1440 and Ordell Steen, 250-267-5990).

In mid-May during many years, balsamroot flowers present a spectacular display on the grasslands near Junction Sheep Range Park above Farwell Canyon (see photo on Field Naturalists website Home Page). In some years, an abundance of other grassland plants occurs with the balsamroot, creating amazing colour combinations. To join us on our search again this year, meet at Scout Island at 8:00 a.m. Bring a camera, sufficient water, and hiking boots. Although we will travel mostly by vehicle on a public trail through private land, expect short walks through the grasslands.

Flowering Plants of Scout Island Nature Centre. Wednesday evening May 28

(leader: Ordell Steen, 250-267-5990)

Meet at Scout Island Nature House parking lot at 6:00 p.m. for an evening walk on Nature Centre trails to discover, identify, and learn some of the many plant species that occur on the island. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass if you have one and any plant guides you wish to use.

Picnic and Paddle at Lac La Hache Tuesday June 10th

(Leader Rick Dawson (250 392-3370))

We will meet at the provincial park picnic site at 5:30 to enjoy our own packed dinner and then paddle down the lake into the marsh. This area has a rich collection of waterbirds and paddlers can often spot a family of otters.

Hairy Fish and BC Lakes, Churn Creek Protected Area

Sunday, June 15 (Leader: Jim Young 398-7987).

With the Friends of Churn Creek, we will hike from Iron Gate Road. A moderate hike will take us through forest, grassland and along wetlands to Hairy Fish, BC Lake, and Grasshopper Lake. A loop will allow us to view a variety of habitats and some areas burned by prescribed fire and wildfire. 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.

Farwell Creek: innovative forest management, a water fall, and an ancient village site. Sunday, July 20

(leaders: Peter Opie 250-392-1440, Ordell Steen 250-267-5990, and Michaela Waterhouse). Join us to view and discuss a forest management demonstration trial near Farwell Canyon in the morning and enjoy a hike along Farwell Creek (2.5 km one way) to the waterfall and village site in the afternoon. The demonstration trial was initiated in 2001 to evaluate innovative forest management practices for improving wildlife habitat, domestic range values, timber production and wildfire risk in densely ingrown Douglas-fir stands. Discussions will focus on the ecology and history of these commonly occurring type of stands, the purpose of treatments, and the results of long-term monitoring of the forests. The afternoon hike will travel

along Farwell Creek for about 2.5 km through grasslands and a variety of forest ecosystems to the falls and then back to vehicles. Bring water, good boots, and a lunch. Meet at Scout Island Nature Centre at 7:30 a.m. to carpool.

McIntosh Lakes canoe/kayak trip. Saturday August 9

(Leader: Ordell Steen 250-267-5990).

McIntosh Lakes are about 35 km by good road southeast of 150 Mile House. We will paddle the southern lake, starting from the rec site adjacent to the lake, through the marshes on sides of the narrows to those at the eastern end of the lake, about 4.5 km from the launch. The lake is seldom busy with other boaters. Expect to see waterfowl. Meet at Scout Island Nature Centre at 8:00 a.m.

Koster Lake, - Gooseberry Flats, Churn Creek

Sunday, 21 September (*Jim Young 398-7987/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, then through old-growth forest to the grassland of Gooseberry Flats above Churn Creek. 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 18th

(Leaders Loyd Csizmadia & Michaela Waterhouse 250-398-5754)

This day-long drive and hike into the park is rather challenging. Dress warmly and wear sturdy hikers. Walking poles might be handy as well. **Meet at Scout Island at 8:00am.** To minimize our impact on the grasslands, we encourage carpooling. If you own a vehicle with good clearance and traction, we will appreciate your services. Don't forget to bring lunch, a thermos of warm liquid or freshwater, as well as your binoculars and camera. The California Bighorns may be in rut, so look forward to seeing some sheep, and perhaps some head-butting!