

BC Nature Spring Conference and AGM
May 10-13, 2012
"The Future of Nature in the Central Okanagan"
Okanagan College

Field Trip Descriptions

Thursday, May 10

9:30 AM – 3:00 PM Preconference field trip: South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Proposal. Bob Lincoln and Dr. George Scotter.

A core area of the national park proposal that is visited by few people, this back-country area contributes to the biodiversity wealth of the South Okanagan -- Similkameen, known as "**A National Treasure of Biodiversity**" and yet "**One of the Four Most-endangered Ecosystems in Canada**". With scenic views deep into adjacent Washington State, a highlight of this tour is a spectacular panoramic vista across expansive, Canadian "**International Grasslands**".

The meeting point is in Osoyoos. Transportation will be by carpooling. Only high-clearance vehicles will be used for carpooling.

Capacity is limited so sign up is required on the registration form (use the tick box at the bottom of the form), and will be on a first-come first-served basis. For late registration for this trip, contact the organizers listed at the bottom of the Registration Form for more information.

9:00 - 11:00 PM Flammulated and Western Screech-Owling, Westside Okanagan Lake. Hugh Westheuser

Two of the smaller and lesser-known owls of the southern interior are featured. Transportation is by car pooling with sites in Bear Creek Park accessible by very short easy walk, and other sites on Bear Creek Forest Service Road.

Friday, May 11

6:00 - 7:45 AM Early morning birding.

Birding by car pool to easily accessible sites in and around Kelowna.

12:30 (or 1:00) – 5:15 PM

Field Trips: All field trips meet at Okanagan College for car pooling except F2, which uses a bus from Okanagan College. Trips F1, F2, F5 and F7 meet at 12:30 PM. Trips F3, F4, F6 and F8 meet at 1:00 PM

- (F1) (12:30 PM) Scenic Canyon of Mission Creek. Dr. George Scotter, Canadian Wildlife Service (retired), and Robert Fulton, Geological Survey of Canada (retired).

Scenic Canyon Park is a jewel in the Central Okanagan Regional District park system. This one-way 6-km moderate walk through 2 billion years of geological history is moderate. It begins at the upstream end near Gallagher's Canyon, and ends downstream at Hollywood Road. There are spectacular views of unique Layer Cake Mt, Pinnacle Rock, hoodoos, sheer canyon walls, native bunchgrass ecosystems with arrow-leaved balsamroot (Okanagan sunflower), and the natural

riparian zones along Mission Creek. Bring water, a hat, a snack and good hiking footwear.

- (F2) (12:30 PM) Garnett Lake – Brigade Trail. David Gregory, local historian, Dianne Hayley
Walk the historic Fur Brigade Trail from Garnett Lake to Hardy Falls. David Gregory will give an intriguing account of the history of the area and the measures that have been taken to preserve it. We will bus to Garnett Lake and then walk along a mostly-flat route, to an incredible viewpoint. We then proceed downhill to Hardy Falls at Antlers Beach Regional Park on Lake Okanagan where the bus will meet us. Total walking distance 6 km, bring water, and good hiking footwear. Cost: \$10/person
- (F3) (1:00 PM) Bear Creek Canyon and Provincial Park. Scott Alexander, Peregrine Consulting, Dr. Dan Durrall, UBC Okanagan Campus
Bear Creek Provincial Park enjoys one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the Okanagan Basin, and partly burned in September 2011. Join us for a few hours as we explore the wonderful world of Bear Creek, from cedars to cactus, bunchgrasses to thimbleberries, lava flows to lupines, and rattlesnakes to raspberries. Look for mushrooms and other fungi sprouting up the first spring after the 2011 fire. The walk is about 1.5 km but includes a long set of stairs to the viewpoint of Bear Creek Falls.
- (F4) (1:00 PM) Saline Sloughs and Urban Wetlands. Dr. Ian Walker, UBC Okanagan Campus
This field trip will tour several wetlands in the north end of Kelowna, focusing especially on their diversity and the pressures exerted upon them by urban development. Sites are easily accessible by car, little walking is required and the trip is suitable for anybody. Wetlands to be visited may include the Rotary Marsh, several ponds in newly developed parts of the Glenmore Highlands, and saline ponds further north in the Glenmore Valley, including Robert Lake. Expect to see a diversity of wetland plants and waterfowl.
- (F5) (12:30 PM) Bear Creek Recreation Site: Protecting Resource Values while Providing for Motorized Recreation. Dick and Joani Dufourd, Off-Highway Vehicle Consultants, Reconnect LLC-Connecting People with Nature Responsibly, Bend, Oregon
This field trip will discuss the past and present of Bear Creek, the largest Recreation Site in the province with potentially the largest OHV trail system in the province. We will trace the path from unmanaged motorized use - with a proliferation of non-sustainable trails, resource impacts, social conflicts, stakeholder conflicts, and public outrage - to a managed sustainable trail system that is now considered the model for the province. We will discuss basic principles of proper OHV management, tour the Aspen OHV Trailhead, view impacts and successful rehabilitation methods, and tour the Bald Range Grassland to discuss its existing condition and the management and rehabilitation efforts underway to restore this unique ecosystem. Sites are easily accessible by car and little walking is required.
- (F6) (1:00 PM) Boulder Trail, Okanagan Mountain Park. Les Gyug, Okanagan Wildlife Consulting

See the flora and fauna that have remained, re-grown, re-colonized or re-inhabited after the Okanagan Mountain Park firestorm of 2003. This is a moderate trail hike of 6 km (round trip) with some uphill. The walk will begin near the end of Lakeshore Road with parking at the trail head near the cell-phone tower.

- (F7) (12:30 PM) Trout Creek Ecological Reserve, Summerland. Don Gayton, ecologist, author, FORREX

Enjoy the humble delights of this small ecological jewel, one of the best remaining examples of the classic Okanagan pine/bunchgrass association. The hike is moderate; boots and long pants are recommended. Transportation by carpooling from Okanagan College to Summerland.

- (F8) (1:00 PM) Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT) Properties, South-east Kelowna. Dr. Barry Jones, President, Central Okanagan Land Trust

The group will visit several sites that show the variety of strategies that COLT uses to secure natural landscapes in the Central Okanagan. These include outright ownership of property and the holding of covenants in partnership with local governments. Some of these environmental preservation projects have been completed while others are in earlier stages. The field trip may be of interest to members of smaller land trusts and environmental preservation societies. Sites are easily accessible by car, little walking is required and the trip is suitable for anybody.

Saturday, May 12

6:00 - 7:45 AM Early morning birding.

Birding by car pool to easily accessible sites in and around Kelowna.

8:30 AM – 12:00 PM Field Trips: Repeat of (F1), (F3), (F4), (F5), (F6). (sign up required)

All field trips meet at 8:30 AM at Okanagan College for car pooling.

For F1, F3, F4, and F5 see descriptions from Friday afternoon.

F6 will be a much shorter (2 km round-trip) and easier version of the Boulder Trail in Okanagan Mt Park beginning at the “CN Trail” end not covered the previous day. Featured will be the flora and birds that have remained, re-grown, re-colonized or re-inhabited after the Okanagan Mountain Park firestorm of 2003. Meet at Okanagan College for car pooling. Walking will begin at the main Okanagan Mt Park parking lot on Lakeshore Road.

Sunday, May 13

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Field Trips

- Kalamo Park. Regional District of Central Okanagan Interpretive Staff

This is an easy walk along the lakeshore and through the Arrow-leaf balsamroot (Okanagan sunflower) covered slopes of Kalamo Park overlooking Okanagan Lake from the west side. Meet at Okanagan College for car pooling to the site. Site is easily accessible by car, and an easy walk along the lakeshore, with optional walks uphill into bunchgrass slopes.

- EcoArt Incubator Project. Nancy Holmes and Denise Kenney, UBC Okanagan Campus

Experience some of the artwork created by this unique research project that brings artists and local places together to create work that raises awareness of the natural world and ecological issues. Meet at Okanagan College for car pooling to various locations in the Central Okanagan. Sites will be easily accessible by car, and the trip is suitable for anybody.

- Burrowing Owl Captive Breeding and Release Program. Oliver

Meet at Okanagan College for car pooling, or take your own car if you intend to continue on home along Highway 3 at the end of the trip. This facility in Oliver opened on the SORCO grounds in May 2011. It is the third and newest facility built to facilitate the breeding of Burrowing Owls to be released into artificial burrows in the Nicola-Thompson and in the South Okanagan. The new 550 sq. m. breeding facility has a central monitoring building where Society biologists can track the progress of the breeding pairs. Within the area are seven separate breeding pens, all connecting back into the central building by underground tunnels. The Oliver facility will be the third active facility in the Society's program in addition to those at the BC Wildlife Park in Kamloops and at Langley. The site is accessible by car on Highway 97 and the trip is suitable for anybody.