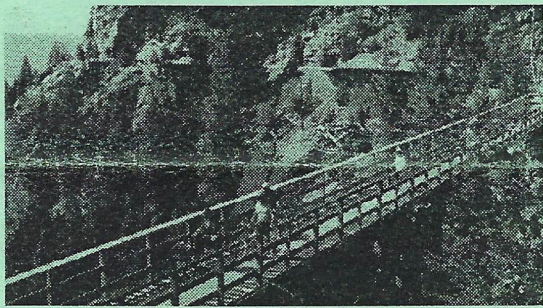
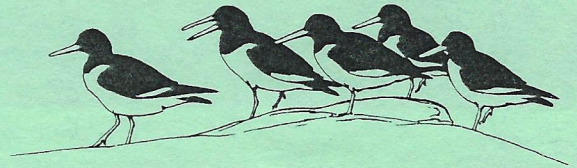


Oystercatcher

The Newsletter of the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club



Big White Trip in the Monashee Mountains

Richard Mills

On September 10th, 2001, twenty-nine club members arrived at the Big White Ski Resort about 40 kms east of Kelowna. The weather was perfect, about 18 degrees centigrade, and the Monashee Mountains were still resplendent in summer green. A pleasant pasta meal was had by all in the White Crystal Hotel where all the guests were booked. There was much gaiety particularly after a great cocktail bash at the Cartwright's condo.

The next morning, September 11th, dawned bright and clear and most of the guests were breakfasting in their kitchenettes, listening to the radio or watching TV. The hikes and walks were planned for 9:30 AM. So at approximately 7:00 AM, 10 AM New York time, the news came over the air waves that an incredible terrorist attack had been made on New York and Washington, D.C. the hikes and walks continued on schedule, but it was hard to concentrate on the environment. Through the day, we all had some fear and bewilderment. It was not until the next morning when it was clear that the US Government was in control, that some confidence was regained.

Regardless, the hike to the top of the Big White Mountain was excellent. It was a 2000' climb, 6000' to 8000', and at the top were several ski runs radiating out like spokes down the mountain. At the summit, most of us stripped down to our shirtsleeves and it was hard to imagine that this rocky terrain would ever be covered in snow. Coming down was harder than going up and walking sticks were used to good advantage. The evening we had a good chicken dinner at the Coast Hotel.

Following was a very interesting talk on the Myra Canyon portion of the Trans-Canada Trail in the

Okanagan valley, which was the location for the next day's walk. Steven Graham, the volunteer director of the Okanagan portion of the trail, explained that the Kettle Valley Railroad Company built a standard gauge line in the early 1900's from a rich mining district in southeastern BC to Hope at the headwaters of the navigable Fraser River. The line crossed the Okanagan Valley and operated until the late 70's. What is unique is that the rail line traversed many steep canyons including Myra Canyon and multiple wooden trestles were built that afforded breathtaking views of the forested gorges. Myra Canyon has 18 trestles and on arrival at he park, the first thought is why did they not just build one long bridge across the canyon instead of winding down about 20 kms around the inner end of the canyon. The first glimpse of the canyon dispels the idea because the canyon is at least 10 kms across and over 300 meters deep.

Hikers, Walkers and Ramblers all had great walks of varying distance. The hikers probably crossed 12 trestles. the trestles have been restored by the Okanagan Trail group volunteers and they are in excellent condition and can be enjoyed by hikers and cyclists alike. It was a great day and culminated with private cocktail parties and an excellent roast beef dinner in the White Crystal. The last day saw farewells but not before a hike up to Rhonda Lake about 3 kms along the Big White slope.

Several club members helped organize the trip, but special thanks goes to Tom and Joanne Cartwright who arranged for accommodations and the catering service. Fred and Jean Howell led the Hiking Group. Tom Cartwright led the Walking Group and Joanne led the Rambler Group. All the leaders spent several advance days scouting out the trails. All in all it was an excellent excursion and a great introduction to the Okanagan Valley and the Monashee Mountains. Hats Off!

Calendar

Dec 11

Christmas Lunch



Jan 24

AGM & Potluck



OYSTERCATCHER

Oystercatcher is published three times annually. Comments, articles or ideas are welcome. Mail them to Oystercatcher, Saltspring Trail & Nature Club, Box 203, Saltspring Island, B.C. V8K 2V9



Trail Mix

New Members:

Patricia Houston, Arona Kagnoff-Henderson, Gayle Burandt, Peter Wiegand, Bob & Ardyce Brawn, Jan Jang, Rita Sagness, Nelly Weibel, Robin Ferry, Norah Walker, Andrew Bryant, Roy & Bea Brewer, Jennifer Jones.

Last Hike: A last goodbye to our dear friend and Past President, Dennis Seward.



Taxi Fare: Remember, \$1 for a trip to North End, \$2 to South End, Ruckle Park, \$3 to Musgrave, etc.
Day trips off-island, \$0.25/km.

Email : If you now have an Email address, send it to Membership Secretary Lynn Thompson at lthompson@salt-spring.com



First Dog Walk

Saturday October 20th heralded our first annual "Frosty's Memorial Dog Walk". A beautiful fall day saw Hunter leading Susie, Quincy, Bonny and Clyde over trails in Mt. Maxwell Park. Water and doggie biscuits were provided by Patricia and April. There were no incidents.

Christmas Lunch

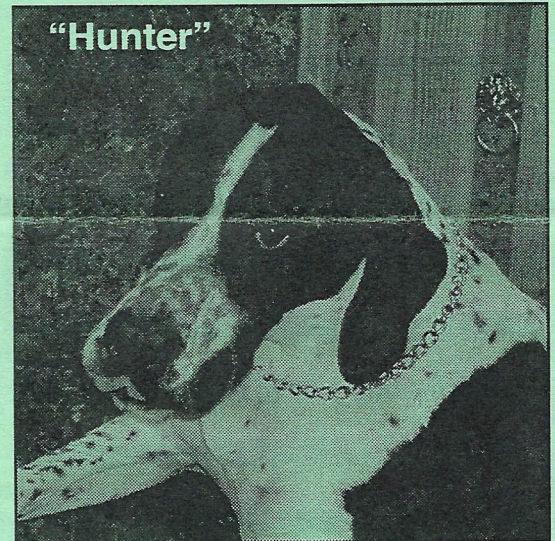
Tickets will be for sale by Rambling, Walking and Hiking co-ordinators and also available at Saltspring Soapworks store. Lunch is at Meaden Hall, Tuesday, December 11, 11:30 a.m. Advance tickets only. Remember, limited seating this year; get your tickets early. Look for details in the Driftwood.

New Policy

Our new policy regarding members who have taken their last hike will be to purchase one metre of the trans Canada Trail in their honour.

Broom Busting

On November 12, Ian Fraser will organize a work party to cut broom in Ruckle Park. Meet 10 a.m. at the Picnic Area. Bring tools—pruners, hand saws, etc.



Spring Trip

Wanted: Volunteer(s) to scout and organize our Spring trip, perhaps to Bamfield. Reconnaissance expenses (gas, ferry, etc) will be reimbursed.

Annual Membership

Dues

Annual Membership Dues for 2002 are due January 1, 2002. The dues are \$17.00 per person. Please send your cheque and any changes to your current address, phone number, or email address to: the Treasurer, Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club, Box 203 Ganges P.O., Salt Spring Island. BC V8K 2V9, before the end of December. Payment can also be made at the annual Christmas Luncheon on December 11. PLEASE help your executive make this a one month drive rather than the usual six month ordeal!

FBCN REPORT

Nancy Braithwaite

The FBCN held its Fall General Meeting at Camp Alexandra at Crescent Beach on the weekend of October 18th/22nd and the hosts were the White Rock & Surrey Naturalists. The theme was BIRDS, BOGS AND BEYOND. The occasion was very successful and well attended by naturalists from as far away as Williams Lake, 100 Mile House and Salmon Arm.

There were a number of good presentations including one on *Co-existing with Coyotes; Farming and Wildlife Pressures in the Delta;* and, *Gas Pipelines, Northern Development and the Environment.* The guest speaker at the banquet on the last evening was Dr. Rob Butler, who is well known as the author of an excellent book on the blue heron and numerous other publications.

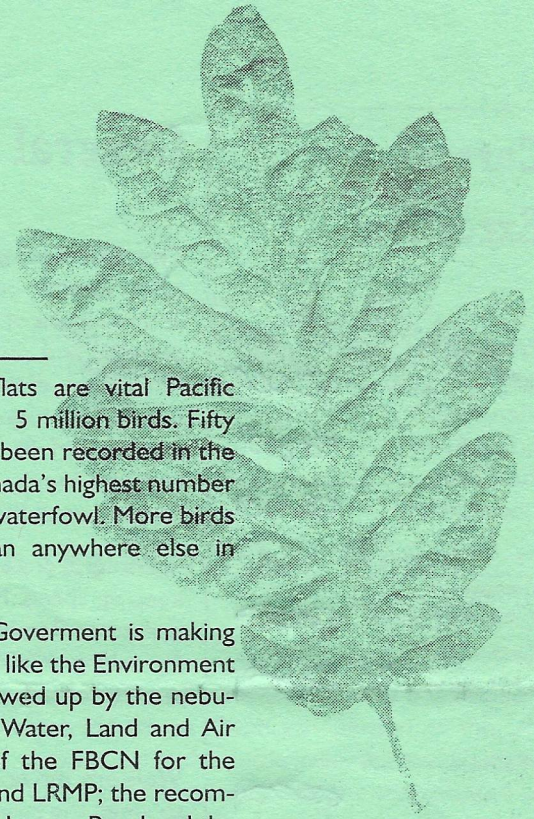
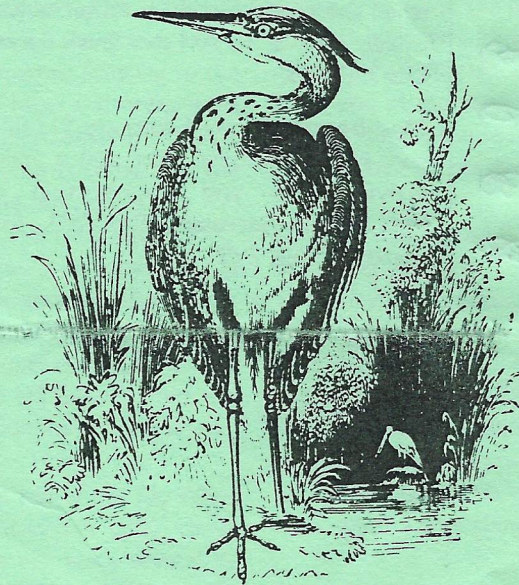
Early morning (6:45) birding excursions took us to Blackie and Brunswick Spits and there were field trips to Burns Bog and the Serpentine Fen as well as a boat trip to Boundary Bay. Burns Bog is still at risk and so I was very glad to have a chance to see it and even fall into it (right over one gumboot!) as it was apparently wetter than our guide had ever known it.

On the Saturday, there was a dedication ceremony of the Fraser River Estuary Important Bird area and a launch of the On-Line IBA Directory (visit www.ibacanada.com) by the Canadian Nature Federation, Bird Studies Canada and Weyerhaeuser combined.

Boundary Bay, Roberts Bank and Sturgeon Bank are included in the IBA. The former is at present a Provincial Wildlife Management Area but it will become a Marine Protected Area—part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and a Ramsar Site. Roberts and Sturgeon Banks will be similarly protected.

The Fraser Estuary mudflats are vital Pacific Flyway stopovers for up to 5 million birds. Fifty species of shorebirds have been recorded in the estuary and it supports Canada's highest number and diversity of wintering waterfowl. More birds of prey winter there than anywhere else in Canada.

Now that the Provincial Government is making such drastic cuts and things like the Environment and Parks are being swallowed up by the nebulous sounding Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, the support of the FBCN for the Protected Areas Strategy and LRMP; the recommendations from the Parks Legacy Panel and the need to implement them; our concern with access, permits, recreational use and disposal of Crown Land are all more vital than ever. And the FBCN includes us!



Current Executive

President:

Bill Harrington 537-1116

Vice-Pres:

Simon Rook 537-5180

Past Pres:

Linda Quiring 537-5118

Treasurer

Rollie McCallum 537-8852

Secretary

Janet Anderson 537-8829

Walkers

Al Robertson 537-9159

Ramblers

Harold Page 653-2820

Hikers

Fred Powell 537-4139

FBCN

Nancy Braithwaite 537-8335

VOLUNTEERS

Membership

Lynn Thompson 537-1674

Trail Co-ordinator

Ian Fraser 537-9849

Archivist

Joanne Cartwright 537-2489

Photography

Chris Pattinson 537-2591

General Information

The Salt Spring trail and Nature Club features Tuesday outings September through June at three levels of ability. The monthly schedule of outings and events is published the final Wednesday of the month in the Driftwood. The fourth Thursday of each month the Club meets at 7:30 PM in the lower hall of the Ganges United Church. The Club is affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists.

Ramblers enjoy walking without pressure to keep up speed. Members of any level fitness are welcome. Ramblers have frequent "time-outs" for taking pictures, examining flowers, plants, stones, fossils, and hugging trees. Rambles start at 10 AM and usually end around 1:30 PM

Walkers move at a relaxed pace taking time to smell the roses. Walkers usually try to avoid long steep climbs and will stop to catch the breath along the way. Walks are generally less than 8 km and end around 2 PM.

Hikers like long, adventurous and occasionally quite strenuous hikes, and like to gain a bit of altitude. Hikers need good strong boots and a good but not excessive level of fitness. They may smell the roses, but do it rather quickly. Hikes usually start at 10 AM and finish between 2:30 and 3:30 PM.

Membership: Annual dues are \$17.00 per person. New members must sign a waiver. Send waiver form and membership dues to Membership Secretary, Box 203, Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2V9

Did You Know?

The following interesting facts are provided by Club Member Harry Burton, organizer of Salt Spring's Apple Festival.

- In 1894, fruit trees outnumbered Salt Spring residents by 10 to 1. There were roughly 450 residents with about 4,600 fruit trees, not counting any smaller orchards under 200 trees. Some of these heritage trees still exist but the large orchards are gone. Although relatively neglected, these remaining old trees still provide a huge volume of vintage cider to local islanders.
- About 1895, Salt Spring Island was not only the first apple producing area, but also the major fruit producing area in British Columbia. From 1860 onwards, settlers were clearing land and settling the island.
- About 1895, Samuel Beddis planted an orchard of 500 trees using rootstock created by planting apples seeds that had been saved from apples eaten on the trip from England. The next year, he grafted these young trees with scions from 40 or so varieties shipped from Ireland. Each scion had been sent safely by mail, embedded in an Irish Potato. His and other orchards flourished in the mild lush climate. A list of the varieties planted exists, with the main varieties being Canada Reinette, Baldwin, Bleinhem Orange, Wealthy, Duchess of Oldenburg and Gravenstein. Some of the Canada Reinettes were so loaded with fruit they had to have every branch propped, and frequently yields per tree were 24 boxes of 50 pounds each. Apples were selling then for 2 cents per pound or 75 cents per bushel.

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