



# Sage Whispers

Newsletter of the Kamloops Naturalist Club

[www.kamloopsnaturalistclub.com](http://www.kamloopsnaturalistclub.com) [www.facebook.com/kamloopsnaturalistclub/](http://www.facebook.com/kamloopsnaturalistclub/)



Red Tailed Hawk

Photo by Steve Schmidt

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**Sept. 19 – Dr. Tom Pypker** is currently a member of the TRU faculty in the department of Natural Resources. He will be speaking about the impact climate change will have on the hydrology, stability and productivity of ecosystems in the Kamloops region.

**Oct. 17** – Master of Science students will present their research findings to date (if any) and will explain the link between their work and our community.

**Dana Eye** – Reproductive Ecology of Female Rattlesnakes

**Stephen Joly** – Home-wreckers or helpers? Extra-pair paternity in mountain bluebird neighbours.

**Susan Dulc** –Bat boxes are a conservation tool...but do they help or hinder?

**Marcus Atkins** – 35 years of population trends of the Western Rattlesnake

**Joey Chisholm** – The use of wildlife cameras in scientific studies: a squirrely example

**Nicholas Fontaine** – Developing and testing the efficacy of a topical probiotic on captive bats to prevent White Nose Syndrome

**Field Trips.**

Upcoming Next Generation Naturalist trips that KNC members are invited to join. Seating is limited, please RSVP with Jesse Ritcey through e-mail: [kamloopswildgrowers@gmail.com](mailto:kamloopswildgrowers@gmail.com)

**Sept 28** - A bus trip to Skeetchestn to view a new permaculture installation behind their school. It is a food forest, which is designed to produce food for their school kitchen and also be a learning tool. A dedication ceremony will be held by a local elder. Shelaigh Garson, the designer, will give a talk on the principles behind the garden and how it was built. After lunch there'll be an option to go on a walk by the creek or to join in contributing to the project by helping to plant garlic and cover crops. Time permitting the day will also include a stop at Macabee fossil bed and Desert Hills Ranch in Ashcroft. 9 am to 5 pm. \$15.

**Nov 2** - A bus trip to view bighorn sheep during the rut. Location to be determined. Trip may also include a study of geomorphology by viewing and discussing the formation of landscapes such as the hoodoos and silt bluffs. Lunch included. \$10.

**City of Kamloops Activity Guide**

The Kamloops Naturalist Club is offering 4 courses through the city activity guide. If interested go here for info on how to register:

<https://www.kamloops.ca/parks-recreation/schedules-programs-and-activities/activity-guide>

There is still lots of room in 2 of the classes:

**Sept. 18** - Discover Bats! with Vanessa Robinson – 7:00pm – 9:00 pm at Pine Park - \$15.00

**Sept. 28** - GeoTour of Kenna Cartwright Park with Nancy Van Wagoner 10:00am - 1:00pm \$15.00



## Kamloops Naturalist Club

The Kamloops Naturalist Club was formed in 1971 and became a registered Society in 1981. It is a member of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists, [www.bcnature.ca](http://www.bcnature.ca) and Nature Canada [www.naturecanada.ca](http://www.naturecanada.ca)

**Sage Whispers** is published every two months, except for July and August.

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### KNC Mailing Address

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### Meetings

7:00 PM, the third Thursday of the month from September to June. Meet at Heritage House, 100 Lorne Street, Kamloops, BC

### Annual Membership

(January 1 to December 31)  
Family \$40  
Individual \$28  
Student \$23

Contact: Winnifred Fischer  
250.376.3944

## Greenstone Mountain Field Trip

The annual Greenstone Mountain field trip in early July is a popular event, and this year was no exception, as 29 individuals took a chance on the dismal weather forecast and assembled in the parking lot at Aberdeen Mall. While non-members filled out day member forms and everyone signed the registration form, a gentle rain was falling and the temperature was very cold, however, with rain coats, hats, and umbrellas, almost everyone was prepared for rainy weather. A cavalcade of 11 vehicles eventually wound its way up the mountain, with the lead vehicle, driven by Ken Lipinski, occasionally stopping to point out a deer among the trees, or a red-tailed hawk and olive-sided flycatcher perched on a snag. Our first official stop was at Roberts Lake, where we spent a lot of time viewing the waterfowl, many of them accompanied by babies, including coots, northern shovellers, and Canada geese. There were lots of other birds flying around such as yellow-headed and red-winged blackbirds, noisy marsh wrens, killdeer, tree swallows, northern rough-winged swallows, cedar waxwings, and red-naped sapsuckers.

As time was passing and we still had a long way to go to the top of the mountain, we carried on up the road, dodging mud puddles and admiring the flowers along the roadside – showy daisies, arctic lupines, red columbines, tiger lilies. We by-passed yellow-monkey flower and bog orchids, making mental note to stop on the way back to take photos of the picturesque scenes. Our goal was to stop at our favorite flower stop, about 19.9 km from the highway and 1.3 km from the top. By this time, people were getting hungry and started munching on their lunches or granola bars as they wandered the hillside, trying to identify the wide variety of flowers on display, including sticky geraniums, sedum, parsley-flowered buckwheat, and arrow-leaved groundsel.



## September 2019

We finally arrived at the parking lot at the top of Greenstone, our official lunch stop. Although it was a little chilly and the mosquitoes were ferocious, we were able to admire the view of the surrounding lakes which included Tunkwa, Leighton, and Kamloops Lakes. A few more plants were added to the list such as cut-leaf anemone, bracted lousewort, golden corydalis, meadow rue, and spotted saxifrage. A few people climbed up to the old forest ranger tower but eventually, everyone headed back down the mountain, stopping to take calendar worthy photos of the flowers earmarked on the way up.

We were lucky with the weather, as it only seemed to rain while we were driving, and miraculously stopped when we stopped to look for birds or flowers. We added western larch to the 4-page plant list, and Isaac Nelson, our expert birder, listed a total of 64 species of birds seen or heard along our route.



# Wells Gray Park

A bus load of Next Generation students, friends, instructors, and KNC members, traveled to Wells Gray Park on June 22, admiring the lupines, oxeye daisies and yellow groundsel along the roadside. We arrived at Helmcken Falls to find that they were shrouded in fog, but luckily, the fog started to lift a few minutes before we re-boarded the bus and everyone was able to admire the spectacular sight of the world famous falls. Our next stop was at the Ray Farm, where we were divided into two groups with expert birders and botanists accompanying each one. Binoculars and field guides were distributed to the students and we set off on the trail looping around the farm, one group going left and the other one going to the right.

We were accompanied by clouds of mosquitoes as we wandered along the trail, stopping frequently to admire the flowers along the way. I was in Lyn Baldwin's group and she explained how to recognize the different plants by families, such as lilies, which have parallel-veined leaves and 3-parted flowers. Because of the wetter climate, we saw a great many flowers and shrubs not seen in the dry Kamloops area – bunch berries, pink wintergreen, delicate twin flowers, false Solomon's seal, Columbia lily, Queen's cup. Shrubs included thimble berry, wild roses, black twinberry, beaked hazelnut, the vicious devil's club. We passed three large clumps of recently deposited bear scat, but the only wildlife seen on the trail was a squirrel that flew across the path and a tiny vole that allowed itself to be examined by curious students. The forest canopy was alive with bird song – western tanager, song sparrow, the ethereal downward spiral of the Swainson's thrush. Isaac Nelson spotted a Redstart and a Magnolia Warbler. Also seen were a Red Crossbill and a White Winged Crossbill, while not that uncommon, have been scarce around Kamloops for a few years.

When we arrived at the mineral springs, some brave souls tasted the water, which tasted like a "strange seltzer". There were huge leaves of skunk cabbage in the swampy area around the mineral springs. Bracken fern filled the original clearings where the old farm buildings were collapsing and another mineral spring beckoned a last viewing before we returned to the bus in the parking lot.

A delicious lunch had been prepared for us by Ellen Ferguson at the old school house, now part of TRU's Wells Gray Education & Research Station. We then crossed the road to tour 'Edgewood Blue' which is a series of wetlands and gardens maintained by famed naturalists and lichenologists Trevor Goward and Curtis Bjork. It is also a giant, outdoor classroom and a key part of The Land Conservancy's Clearwater Ancient Swamp and Wildlife Corridor. We boarded the bus for the trip back to town at 4:30, just in time to miss the rain that poured down as soon as the door was closed.

It was great to have so many of the Next Generation Naturalists learning alongside long time club members. Gratitude to the Lawson Foundation for making our incredible day possible.



# September 2019



Mineral Spring



Bracket Fungus



Ray Farm

Photos by Winnifred Fischer



Photo by Lyn McDonald



Photo by Lyn McDonald



# Next Generation Update

The Next Generation Naturalists have continued their learning this summer with lectures and exciting field trips. A visit from Ron and Marianne Ignace, both experts on the Secwepemc people, was particularly meaningful. Several KNC members sat in on the three hour lecture which took place at TRU and covered topics related to Secwepemc history and culture, ethno-botany, and ethno-ornithology. Marianne's lecture was informative and everyone came away having learned new things. Ron sat in the audience but periodically added details and storytelling that captivated the young people present. For those interested in learning more, Marianne helped me prepare binders of excerpted chapters and works from various books and journals her and Ron have contributed to.

Another fun day was working with TRU's Christine Peterson and Susan Purdy on a lab analysis of Daybreak Pond. This is the retention basin beside the Canada Games pool and only a short distance from the Science Building. After everyone got on their waders and gum boots we carefully carried our buckets and equipment down to the water's edge. We took various readings from water quality meters as well as collected zooplankton and invertebrate specimens to bring back to the lab for viewing under a microscope. The relative abundance and composition of these organisms allowed us to make a rough estimate of the water quality. Our results indicated a poor water quality. Dissolved oxygen was just below 5 mg/L, which also is poor. This pond was once larger but a field was created over the cattails that helped purify the water. Although not terrible the results do indicate room for improvement. This may be a project that the Next Generation Naturalists decide to undertake next year.



# Gold Panning

Once again this year KNC members volunteered their time to raise money for the club by acting as tour guides for visiting students in TRU World's programs. The majority of students came from Indonesia, although there was one group from Japan as well. On each outing there is a group of between 20-25 people who spend a couple of hours learning about the ecology of the Tranquille creek area and then gold panning in the creek. 162 students from 8 different groups took part this year, raising \$2430 for the club. This year KNC also sponsored a group of children from the Kamloops Immigrant Centre to take part on an outing at no cost. On two of the trips volunteers spotted a mother bear and her two cubs. Bear spray is always carried as a precaution.





September 2019



Photos by Lynne Borle and Adele Stapleton



# Our Members

Mandy Ross

By Joan Best



Mandy has been around! She was born in Red Deer, Alberta, but raised in Cambridge, Ontario. She has lived, briefly, in Canmore, which is back in Alberta, but completed her undergraduate studies in Guelph, in Ontario. Marriage made a difference, as she and her husband, Andrew Corks have lived in Kamloops for many years now. They have one son, Theo, almost two years old and a charmer if ever there was one.

As to Mandy's education, as noted above, she earned her Masters in Environmental Science right here at Thompson Rivers University. With that degree and devotion to her chosen profession, she has worked on various environmental research contracts for B.C. Parks, the Ministry of Forests, and University of British Columbia, amongst others. She adds, in brackets, "I am striving to be considered an ecologist!"

Her hobbies and interests, most shared with her husband and even small son sometimes, include climbing, hiking, skiing (which includes X-country, downhill and ski touring), mountain biking, botany, canoeing, knitting, painting, and she adds here, "When I have the time!" and, to round off the outdoor activities, believe it or not, ice climbing! Quite naturally all these interests lead the family to "get outside as much as possible".

Other Kamloops groups with which she is involved include Kamloops NatureKids, Wild and Tiny YKA, a parent and tot hiking group, and the Kamloops Climbing Access Fund. She became a Club member to learn more about the natural areas around here and to meet other like-minded people. She participates in the annual grassland clean-up and the occasional Club outing. She adds that "She is a busy parent with a busy tot, so it's difficult to get out to events"; no kidding, Mandy! However, she does love being a Club member.

