

The Gregson Native Plant Walk
By Gary Hunt



Some of you may have seen the new signage on McArthur Island designating The Gregson Native Plant Walk. Our younger club members will not have known Jack Gregson, but he was a prominent member of our club and the naturalist community for many years. I remember the presentations he made to our club on local butterflies. He would capture them and put them in the refrigerator to slow them down, then photograph and release them.

[His obituary](#) notes his many accomplishments. Jack was a true naturalist and environmentalist. In 1936 he established the Kamloops Outdoor Club. During his 70 years in Kamloops, he was an outspoken environmental advocate. He was also a founding member of the Kamloops and District Garden Club (1950) and the Kamloops Naturalist Club (1970). He received many awards for his efforts and is recognized for his leadership in bringing about numerous initiatives. Among them was the Waterway Park at McArthur Island, the Butterfly Gardens at Riverside Park and McArthur Island, and the bicycle

/footpath east of his property on the South Thompson River. He received the Grassroots Award for beautification and protection of the Kamloops natural landscape, BC Federation of Naturalists Club service award, the Kobayashi Award for best landscaped property and was made a Freeman of the City of Kamloops in 1990.

In 2000, Jack was awarded an [honourary doctorate](#) from Thompson Rivers University. This award recognizes his distinguished career in entomology and numerous other accomplishments. The award notes that Jack's research achievements are known and respected worldwide; he published over 80 scientific papers and was the US Naval Medical Unit's consultant on parasitic problems in the Middle East. As an international expert, he was invited to attend World Health Organization and other international congresses related to arthropod-borne diseases in the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. He was recognized as Canada's leading authority on ticks and tick-borne diseases, and named three new species of BC ticks. He has had an eastern tick, *Ixodes (Pholeoixodes) Gregsoni*, named after him in recognition of his 40 years of scientific contributions to the understanding of the taxonomy, ecology, and disease vector capacity of ticks. Interested in the field of entomology beyond his specialization, he also photographed over 40 local species of butterflies and moths.

The original trail named in his honour was East of the family property that connected Lorne Street East and Kelly Douglas Road and ran next to the South Thompson River. It was closed in 2020 when the CP rail line was expanded. In 2021 we sent a request to City staff that a new trail be named. After consultation with the five Gregson siblings, it was agreed that the native plant walk on McArthur Island would be appropriate.

Thank you to Sue Cane, friend of the Gregson family, for the photo and bringing this to our attention.

Postscript:

We thought we had lost the sign when Sue Cane noticed that it was missing in February. She reported it to the city and the investigation found that it was stolen. A few days later, it was found by the RCMP and returned to the city. It is now back up where it belongs, hopefully permanently.