

**Shuswap Naturalist Club General Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
SASS Library**

Di Wittner, Chair for this meeting, welcomed 20 members at 8 PM to SASS library.

We'd like our meetings to be fun, and we want to encourage more members to attend, so we'll try opening each meeting with one or two members sharing a special photo. You're invited to bring your favourite nature shot on a memory stick to help us get the evening off to a lively start.

Photos & Stories (aka, Show n' Tell)

For our traditional December 'member sharing' time, we enjoyed the following exceptional photos from near and far, and tales of how they were captured:

Di Wittner – hard to spot wildlife including rare crested owls, black tamarinds and pygmy marmosets that she was able to photograph on an Amazon adventure

Colin Spence – impressive close ups of local birds...robins, eagles, Canada geese and great blue heron

John Woods – Brandt's cormorant, Heermann's gull, Steller's sea lion all viewed off the coast of Vancouver Island, also Wilson's snipe feeding in Salmon Arm Bay mud flats, and brilliant fungi in Coyote Park and Park Hill

Ken Raynor – examples of some of the fascinating data we might collect with a MOTUS station in our bay

Break – thanks to Pam Saul, Pat Turner and Isabell Elden for Christmasy treats tonight.

We extended our sincere appreciation to Pam for her leadership of the refreshment break committee for many years. Special 'thank you' also to Pat Turner and Mike Saul for their expert assistance. They made a great team, and are happy to hand over the task to new volunteers, Isabell Elden and Barb Raynor.

Minutes: Marlene McDonald moved approval of the November 7 minutes. Pat Mearns 2nd. Carried.

Treasurer's report: Ted Hillary submitted his financial statement for December 1, 2023:

Bank Balance November 1, 2023		\$4495.23
Revenue		
Dues	195.00	
Interest	.37	\$ 195.37
Disbursements		
Blackburn Park	332.50	\$332.50
Bank Balance December 1, 2023		\$4358.10

Patronage

\$.89

Larch Hills Sign Project	\$2500.00
Songbird Committee	\$ 80.00

Ted moved acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. Mike Saul 2nd Carried.
Club dues for 2024 are payable now: \$30 (single), \$35 (family).

Old Business:

1) Cariboo Carbon Solutions – Carla Kirkpatrick – Carla and Janet Aitken attended a recent meeting about this tree planting initiative. The organization is looking for very large parcels of land that need to be replanted. The Shuswap's newly burned areas would be suitable. SABNES plans to use about 1000 trees on the foreshore.

2) The call went out to members by email earlier in the week about the Little Mountain (then Park Hill) Forest Mitigation Information Meeting, Dec. 7th 3:00 to 7:00 PM Room 100, City Hall. We need members to attend and raise questions.

Glenda Hanna updated us about the Little Mountain Forest Wildfire Mitigation issue that came to light in the spring of 2022. At that time, we formed the Urban Woodlands Park Committee, and passed this motion:

MOTION: Presented as Draft 1. Dawn McDonald moved that Representatives from Shuswap Naturalists meet with City Parks, Council and other invested personnel to express our concerns and seek solutions regarding impacts on wildlife habitat and forest ecosystems caused by wildfire mitigation work in our local parks. 2nd Di Wittner. Motion carried.

We also wrote of our concerns to BC Nature, and in June learned that "*a detailed letter of support has gone out to relevant BC government departments.*" However, it now appears that work continues at Little Mountain, and that the City intends to proceed with similar plans at Park Hill and Coyote Park. Some concerns were expressed about city council bypassing the Environmental Committee, doing little to inform the public and ignoring our position that wildfire mitigation must also preserve and enhance the ecology, address water conservation issues and consider park user values.

We will follow up on this issue, and discuss the results of the December 7 City Council meeting, at our January 9 meeting.

3) **Motus Bird Tracking System:** Ken Raynor reported that a grant application to Shuswap Community Foundation is in the works. Ken has been canvassing local hotels, the school board and other potential sites for the location of a MOTUS station.

4) **Court case** re: tree removal during nesting season: No further details are available yet, pending update from Kimberly and Todd Dunlop (neighboring property owners).

Reports:

1) **Christmas Bird Count:** John Woods - The 124th annual CBC will be held **Sunday, December 17**. Post-count social and tallying will be at First United Church 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Come join us even if you weren't out with a count group. Use 4th St door, and please remove boots at the entry. Bring snack food to share and your coffee mug. There will be an auction of donated items (nature-related or not) as a fundraiser for the club: if you can contribute to this, please bring items along that afternoon.

Sunday, December 10: Christmas Bird Count for kids (accompanied by adults) led by Molly Cooperman, 1-3 PM, meet at the foreshore trail gate (washroom site). All welcome to participate.

2) **Outings Committee** - John & Marcia Woods, Cathy Meakes: The committee is preparing a year-long list of outings based on previous popular excursions and some new ideas. More suggestions welcome. Also, they need additional members on the committee to help support outing leaders. Let John know if you'd like to join this active group.

3) **Larch Hills Trail signage project:** Pat Danforth reports the writing and formatting of about 50 new signs for Phase 1 is progressing well. Next on the list is historical detail for 2 intro signs, placement decisions for about 10 signs near the start, final compilations and edits of bird/animal details, and confirmation/sourcing of some photos. The goal is to have signs printed and ready this winter for a spring installation.

4) Pam Saul drew out attention to a useful kit available to borrow from the Okanagan Regional Library. It's a backpack full of birding items: field guides, a picture book, binoculars—all you or your guests might need to explore our birding trails. Check it out: [Birding Backpack | Okanagan Regional Library | BiblioCommons](#)

5) **Next Newsletter:** January 1, deadline for items to Marlene McDonald is December 28.

Next meeting: January 9, AGM/election of Executive for 2024. This is an important meeting to get the new year off to a good start. You are urged to attend, and please consider letting your name stand for any of our executive positions to help the club move forward.

Speaker for the meeting: Di Wittner....on badgers.

MOTION to Adjourn by Mike Saul at 9:05 PM

Where to send What:

1) Please send information you wish to be forwarded to all club members to Ken Raynor, at ken.r.sa.bc@gmail.com. As Communications Director, he will relay upcoming meeting/activity announcements (or cancellations), meeting minutes, information from any of our committees (e.g. BC Nature, Environment).

2) Please send any items or correspondence about eNewsletters directly to Marlene McDonald, mcdonald@airspeedwireless.ca Next eNewsletter, January 1, 2024. Submission deadline: Dec 28.

3) **Next Meeting:** January 9 at SASS Library 7:00 PM Please send agenda items to **Janet Aitken** janetaitken1@gmail.com , **Chair** for the meeting.