

## **Shuswap Naturalist Club Minutes**    Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Ed McDonald welcomed 24 eager-to-meet-again members to the shelter at Blackburn Park at 2 pm.

**Minutes:** none, as we've been enjoying eNewsletters instead for the past 7 months.

**Treasurer's Report:** No report in Ted Hillary's absence.

### **Announcements**

1) Fern Fennell has started a Facebook page for the Shuswap Naturalist Club, and welcomes items of interest to the group that she can post. Go to "Shuswap Naturalist Club", ask to join and Fern will add you to this closed group.

2) Members' blogs of interest: *Gillian Richardson...naturally* ([gmrichardson.wordpress.com](http://gmrichardson.wordpress.com)) is Gillian's blog about nature observations around her Blind Bay garden and beyond. Also check Sarah Weaver's blog, *Coast Lines*, at ([linesfromthecoast.blogspot.com](http://linesfromthecoast.blogspot.com)). A longtime member, Sarah has moved to Victoria but still writes about environmental issues for Friday AM.

3) Members Clive and June Bryson have decided to step back from the Club due to ongoing health concerns. Ed will send a thank-you from the Club to thank both for their willing contributions over many years to our group. June participated on committees and recently coordinated the coffee break at meetings, and Clive generously contributed his expertise and exceptional photos to our webpage and for various projects. We wish them well.

### **Business**

1) BC Nature: Di Wittner is encouraging the Club to take up some suggestions from the recent BC Nature Spring Meeting, e.g. bat detectors can be installed near bat boxes to identify species in our area; osprey baskets made with recycled rebar would be more durable than current wooden ones; educational signs about snakes in the sanctuary would encourage visitors to better appreciate their role in the habitat. Funds from SABNES and SNC are available for these projects.

2) SABNES: Janet Aitken reported that another weed pull for invasive woody nightshade is being considered for the fall. The city will be upgrading the nature trail in September, so might be a good time to enlist their help with disposal. SABNES has hired 2 Interpreters for the summer at Brighthouse Nature Centre. Janet noted that \$6000 has been donated as a result of the nest box vandalism, as well as \$2000 from Nature Trust and a \$750 gift card from Askews. Since many of the damaged boxes have been replaced, the excess money could be used for bat boxes, to rebuild the viewing platform or to establish a bluebird trail.

3) Ed McDonald noted that reed canary grass may also appear ambitious in its spread but is a non-invasive plant that First Nations have long used in various ways. He's seen attractive colors—red, yellow as well as green—along the foreshore where Western Grebes use it to anchor their nests. Also, voles live among the reeds, as noted during most recent flooding which drove large numbers to higher ground. They are prey for Short-eared Owls and Great Blue Herons resident in the marsh.

4) Carla Kirkpatrick and Fern Fennell reported on recent wildlife rescue activities keeping them busy, and learning new skills—11 cases in 10 days. Five orphaned 3-week-old raccoons required intensive overnight care before being transported to Kamloops. Two young herons that fell from nests had to be euthanized. Di Wittner notes the volunteer group has had one information session but more discussion is needed so everyone is on the same page re: requirements, obligations.

5) Marlene McDonald urged that a committee be set up by the fall to deal with Executive succession. All positions are open at year end, to be filled in January elections. We urgently need to fill the vacant Vice-President's post, and to encourage someone to take over as President now that Ed has completed 21 years (whew!) in that role. Help and suggestions wanted.

### **Sightings/Sharing:**

1) Dawn McDonald reported that a large number of squirrels had been found killed in Little Mountain Park. She was following up on this.

2) Fern Fennell has seen enough bluebirds at Peterson's Orchard on 35<sup>th</sup> Street NE to support nest boxes there. She's also seen Lazuli Buntings there, and Swainson's Hawks nesting on Mt Ida.

3) Anne Caughlan reports more sand and gravel have been added to the turtle habitat at Gardom Lake, and she saw 3 turtles there. Gardom Lake Stewardship Society has posted a \$1000 reward for information concerning the nest box vandalism on the foreshore. On July 1, there will be a thistle pull in the Gardom Lake wetland; anyone welcome to come and help.

4) John Woods counted 50 bird species plus a wealth of turtles while canoeing at Gardom Lake.

5) Marie Fortin confirmed Gardom Lake is a great place to see numerous turtles, and birds.

Motion to Adjourn at 3:00 pm by Mike Saul.