

**Shuswap Naturalist Club Meeting  
Sunnybrae Provincial Park  
Tuesday, September 6, 2022**

Today's first meeting of the new season was Chaired by Ed McDonald, who welcomed 16 members to the picnic site at Sunnybrae Provincial Park at 11 am.

**Minutes:** Gillian Richardson moved Minutes be accepted as circulated in June. Fern Fennell, 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Treasurer:** Ted Hillary submitted his report:

**Financial Statement September 1 2022**

<b>Bank Balance June 1 2022</b>		\$6004.24
<b>Receipts</b>		
Dues	130.00	
Interest	1.33	\$131.33
<b>Disbursements</b>		
BCN-AGM Expenses	200.00	
Table - Young Naturalists	61.59	\$261.59
<b>Bank Balance September 1 2022</b>		\$5873.78
<b>Patronage</b>		\$0.89

**Announcements:**

1) Anne Caughlan, Program Director, has lined up speakers for the next couple of meetings:

- Club member Claire Christensen will talk about butterflies
- Phil McIntyre-Paul, Senior Consultant with the Shuswap Trail Alliance will talk about the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail

2) **A volunteer is needed to Chair the October meeting.** Please let us know if you are willing to take a turn at this task.

3) As noted in the September eNewsletter, our webmaster, Dorothy Parks, would like to pass along that title after 12 years of maintaining our informative Club website. **We are looking for a volunteer to take over management of the website.** If you have the skills and interest, please let us know.

4) **Another volunteer needed!** Janet Aitken has been filling in as Communications Director while we search for a new President. This is the role Marlene McDonald has done so capably while Ed served as President. It involves relaying informative emails and notifications to members between meetings. Skills include maintaining a current members' email list, and sending out group emails with

attachments such as meeting minutes. **Please let us know if you can take on the role of Communications Director.**

**And we repeat our request for a member to step forward to serve as SNC President for the 2022/23 year.**

**Business:**

1) Blackburn Park trees - Joyce Henderson acknowledged the dedicated assistance of the 'watering crew' this summer, including Cathy Gillick (gatekeeper extraordinaire), Monique Pharand, Ed & Marlene McDonald. The trees, planted in 2020 to commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, are mostly doing well. Joyce noted spending the \$400 allocated in June for keeping the grass/weeds cut around them. She would like to have a work party in early October to lay landscape fabric and mulch to mitigate future weeding chores. More details TBA.

**MOTION:** Joyce Henderson moved that we buy landscape fabric and mulch for this project, cost TBA. Di Wittner, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Carried.

**Reports:**

1) Bluebird trail - Fern Fennell enthusiastically noted nesting success in 2 boxes at Peterson's Orchard, and 4 others occupied by swallows and bluebirds.

2) H5N1 Avian Flu update - Di Wittner reported one positive case has been confirmed in a Canada goose she had tested this summer. Di also mentioned there has been no confirmation of cases beyond waterfowl at this time, but the risk increases during migration when birds are moving and mixing in new areas.

3) Urban Woodland Parks Committee - Glenda Hanna drew our attention again to BC Nature's enthusiastic response to the Committee's report about wildfire mitigation in urban parks, and the excellent news that a detailed letter of support has gone out to relevant BC government departments. It is hoped the key recommendations in the report will be taken into consideration across the province as wildfire mitigation continues. BC Nature will post any response from the province on their website. This is a feather in our SNC cap, and a chance to influence outcomes in parks across BC thanks to the leadership and hard work of the Urban Woodland Parks Committee.

4) Nest box/Western Grebe data - Colin Spence proposed that this data (population numbers, locations of boxes) from years of monitoring should be stored appropriately so it is accessible for study. He and Di Wittner will work on setting it up so it can be kept in BC provincial records.

**Show & Tell:**

1) **Ed McDonald** had his mind on ants this time....with a small container of captives from the garden to introduce the topic. Of 16,000 species worldwide, 1,000 live in North America, and 9 (carpenter ants) in BC. Ed has been reading *Planet of the Ants*, by Susanne Foitzik and Olaf Fritsche, and passed along a few interesting tidbits, concluding that ants are better custodians of the environment than we are (surprise?) since they improve the soil with their tunnelling, allow water and oxygen to reach plant roots, pollinate plants and scatter seeds. P.S. the captive garden ants all escaped!

2) Di Wittner shared a photo of her extraordinary discovery in a duck box along the foreshore trail: a pair of downy barn owl chicks! Now she's hoping the adults (not sighted yet) will continue to nest in the nature sanctuary, as few have been reported here (1 sighting recorded on the 2005 Christmas Bird Count).

**Sightings:**

Mike Saul - a sea otter while fishing off Ucluelet

Glenda Hanna - a barred owl followed her and her dog along the trail in Coyote Park

Carla Kirkpatrick - red-necked grebes off Sunnybrae Park

Shelley Wallace - encountered deer while cycling on Eagle Bay Road

John Henderson - a bear in his driveway

Ed/Marlene McDonald - a bear enjoying a cool sit-down in their pond

**12:15. Motion to adjourn** - Mike Saul