

Shuswap Naturalist Club Minutes – Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Acting Chair, BC Nature Rep Di Wittner used Ed's gavel to bring the meeting to order. She welcomed 27 members to Room 130 at Okanagan College at 7 pm, including newest members Helen Vallee, Daryl Cornwell, and Diane Colombo.

Minutes: Gillian Richardson moved acceptance of March 2, 2022 minutes. 2nd Colin Spence

Treasurer's Report: Ted Hillary

Financial Statement April 6, 2022

Bank Balance December 31, 2021		\$3751.49
Receipts		
Dues	562.46	
Coffee (gift)	18.10	
Interest	.34	\$580.90
Disbursements		
BCNature Annual Dues	1140.00	\$1140.00
Bank Balance April 6 2022		\$2792.39
Patronage		\$.89

Ted moved acceptance of the Financial Statement: 2nd Mike Saul
Ted reported the signing authority has been changed to himself and Gillian Richardson.

Announcements:

- 1) Di Wittner reported no update regarding the vacant position of Club President. If you are willing to put your name forward, please let Di or Janet Aitken know.
- 2) Molly Cooperman asked for volunteers to help with a tree planting project at Carlin Elementary School, managed by the BC Small Wetlands Association in collaboration with the Switzmalph Cultural Society. Dates: April 19 (for prep of the area) and April 20 to plant 70 trees, during school hours 8:30-2:30. For more info, contact mcooperman@hotmail.com [P.S. See the email from Molly sent on Saturday, April 9 with details about the 9 tree species chosen for their cultural significance.]
- 3) BC Nature AGM scheduled for May 26-28, Kelowna, has only 50 people registered so far. Stay tuned for updates regarding whether it will go ahead as planned.
- 4) Outings Committee: Pat Danforth, Hanne MacKay, Dawn McDonald. Pat reminded everyone that the list of spring outings has been emailed to members. The first outing is 10:00 am, April 14, Wharf

and Foreshore, led by Fern Fennell. Reminders will go out prior to each outing. Some may require RSVP, especially out of town sites to make sure folks are planning to attend. Only paid-up members may participate due to our insurance policy.

Business:

1) Di Wittner nominated Colin Spence to the Board of Directors. Colin accepted the nomination. The nomination was put to a vote and Colin was duly elected.

2) **Little Mountain Deforestation update: (Dawn McDonald, Colin Spence, Janet Aitken, Sandra Seale, Pat Danforth).** Dawn McDonald presented a map and collection of photos to show the nature of the area, and the detrimental results of fire mitigation activities that began in 2021. Much undergrowth and most small trees have been removed from large tracts of the park, and the pond areas disturbed. Park Hill area is slated for similar treatment shortly. She reported that the committee is finding some consensus with respect to the negative impacts they are seeing among the public who use the trails and enjoy the wildlife that inhabits the parks.

Colin Spence contacted the City of Salmon Arm for information about the plans. Through the Freedom of Information process, he received a wildfire protection plan, but found it very forestry-centric, with the need to protect the ecosystem largely overlooked. The public consultation phase seems to have been missed; in particular, Shuswap Naturalist Club had no input. There is need to consider how to balance the habitat and trail values for the community with the need to mitigate fire hazards before more work goes ahead. Cedar trees are being negatively affected by climate change already, so removing young ones adds a further stress.

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.

MOTION: Presented as Draft 2. Dawn McDonald moved that representatives from Shuswap Naturalist Club arrange for regular meetings with City Parks Supervisors and Council Members to discuss ongoing and immediate concerns regarding nature in our community. 2nd Pat Danforth

Discussion: A question arose as to whether this action would bypass the Environmental Action Committee (EAC) and its work. It was agreed that existing members of the EAC should be consulted before making further motions. Motion not carried. Decision was made to table the Motion to the May 4 meeting for further discussion.

3) **Prestige Inn & Foreshore Development update:** Colin Spence sent out his Prestige Inn Impact Assessment and Mitigation Update ahead of tonight's meeting explaining the nature of his investigation into possible environmental impacts since the hotel was constructed. Further discussion was tabled to the next meeting.

4) **Curlew Count:** Di Wittner asked if anyone was interested in participating in our area. At least 2 people would be needed for this detailed field study to be conducted between April 15 and May 15. For more info, email Di at dwildlife8@gmail.com or ask Ed McDonald about previous sightings e.g. at

Neskonlith, Chase. David Bradley at Birds Canada needs our 'expression of interest' by April 15th so please let Di know if you wish to participate before then.

5) Bird Box Report: Di Wittner/ Fern Fennell reported boxes are being well used by bluebirds, and the 3 landowners on whose property they were installed are enthusiastic about the project. We now have 101 boxes at the foreshore and bluebird trail. Four of the new boxes were specialty-built by Werner Groeschel, suited to kestrels, saw whet, flickers and pygmy owls. Bob Petrie donated several boxes made from cedar. One is specific for chickadees and has replaced an old chickadee box on the trail.

6) Room rental at College. What to do with our two-meeting credit. Should we seek a new site for the fall? This item was tabled to the May 4 meeting.

7) Pat Danforth's report on the Larch Hills Interpretive Trail was tabled until the May meeting.

8) Di Wittner asked for a volunteer to chair the May 4 SNC meeting. Mike Saul accepted the task.

Sightings:

Di Wittner - Christmas island...Canada goslings

Colin Spence - Pacific chorus frogs on Park Hill reservoir trail...he played a recording for us!

Judith Benson - Northern shrike at the foreshore

John Woods – yellow-rumped warblers are turning up everywhere

Joyce Henderson - garter snakes in Peter Jannink Park

Mike Saul – Lewis woodpecker at Naramata

Motion to adjourn: Mike Saul moved to adjourn at 8:15 pm

Coffee: Thanks to the committee for the refreshments.

Presentation:

Ron Ste Marie, Notch Hill Community Growers, talked to us about regenerative agriculture, so vital because of the climate crisis that is affecting balance in nature, and sustainability re: food deserts, urban agriculture. His farm is operated with an eye on 5 goals: address climate change, re-establish a wetland to increase biodiversity, improve local food security, practice regenerative farming, create community. Video was unavailable, but Ron kept us engaged with his animated, thought-provoking presentation and invited everyone to visit Notch Hill Community Growers to see what is being done, and to help out if interested. 1962 Notch Hill Road, ttjsternie@hotmail.com