



THE HONKER



Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

June 2010



SPRING IS IN THE AIR

COYOTE PUPS & MOOSE WITH CALF – GREG TELLIER;
GREAT-HORNED OWL CHICK – GLENDA ROSS; BEAR WITH CUB – JIM GINNS

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South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

Mailing Address: PO Box 23050, Penticton, BC, V2A 8L7

Website: <http://www.members.tripod.com/~sonc/>

Mission Statement:

"To provide a dynamic local focus for experiencing the natural world of B.C. and for promoting its conservation"

Membership: \$30 Individual \$40 Family (yearly – September to August)

- **Indoor meetings** are held on the 4th Thursday of the month, September to May (except for December) at 7:30 pm in the basement of the Penticton United Church, 696 Main Street (blue church on the corner of Main & Eckhardt). Please bring your own coffee mug ---- New members always welcome,
- **Executive meetings** are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Please contact any Executive member if you wish to add an item to the agenda.
- Our **birding, wildflower, geology, social group** meets every Thursday in the north parking lot of Cherry Lane Mall (north of Warren Ave. and east of Atkinson St.) at 9:00 AM. Be prepared to car pool and offer a donation to the driver (\$3 for local trips and more for longer trips). Trips range from 'car birding' to easy strolls to moderate hikes. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Everyone welcome! For more info, please contact Joyce Hoglund 250-492-0512 or hoglundj@telus.net
- **Field Trips** are generally made in the spring and fall. A list of forthcoming trips will be placed in the Honker. Notify the trip leader of your intention to participate and inquire about trip duration, degree of difficulty and other requirements. Dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear appropriate footwear, bring lunch and drinking water". Pets are NOT appropriate.
- BC Nature is our parent society. SONC is affiliated with Nature Canada & Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance (OSCA)

Executive Officers:

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South Okanagan Habitat Garden Joyce Hoglund ☎
Thursday Birding: Charmaine Foster

gramfos@shaw.ca; Joyce Hoglund ☎

Newsletter Submission Dates:

The 15th of: January March June
September and November

We welcome any nature-related articles (about 1/2 page in length), artwork/photos (both cover art & smaller pieces), poems or cartoons.

Please recycle - pass the newsletter on to a friend



Front Cover: Spring is in the Air – a collage of some of our future generations. Some of them are

literally in our back yard and, unfortunately, learning bad habits from mom.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - JUNE 2010

Wow, where does the time go? I do remember a great but busy Spring. The Kamloops Naturalist Club hosted an excellent AGM. I had so much fun biking with the winning team on the bike on the Big Day Challenge,. Thanks to all who sponsored any of us for the Baillies Birdathon, all monies raised go to a good cause. Now, here it is, the first day of summer and the longest day of the year is here - and gone!

But where is the hot summers I remember? I know, wait for it – I'm sure it'll be here soon enough. However, not before we got to witness Mother Nature at her most unpredictable! I have personally witnesses the power of water, but not to the extent of the damage done by the waters from Testalinden. My condolences to all those who have lost so much.

Along with these losses we have also had to say goodbye to another of our long time members – Bob Gibbard, he readily shared his knowledge of nature, and he had a very vast knowledge!. Over the years he contributed a lot to our Club – I will miss his demure presence at our meetings when we return in the Fall.

Throughout the summer Mits, Charmaine & Joyce have an exciting line up for outings. I'm sure you'll have an awesome time on any/all of the outings – enjoy the day(s).

Whatever you do and where ever you summer travels take you – BE SAFE & ENJOY!

See you all in September.

☞ Glenda Ross – President ☞

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, MAY 27/10

1. President Glenda Ross welcomed members, guests and new members Suzie Anderson and Marianne Keller.
2. Sightings: Screech owl with 3 chicks, Anna's humming bird, Western Tanager.
3. Announcements: a) Bob Handfield has been successfully nominated by SONC for a BC Nature Club Service Award. The award and certificate had been presented earlier. b) Mike Roberts of CHBC TV has been successfully nominated by SONC to receive the BC Nature Recognition Award. His certificate and award will be presented at Linden Gardens on Friday morning May 28.

c) Harold King is to receive the Elton Anderson award at a ceremony at the Osoyoos Senior's Center June 7 from 3 to 5 pm. This a BC Nature award recognizing Harold's long dedication to nature.

4. Program: a) Marlene introduced James Nemes, 11 year old student who won the SONC Science Prize. He presented to us his project "Saving the Rain Forest." B) Anthea then introduced Jim Ginns who showed pictures from a trip to Panama which 5 club members participated in.
5. Refreshment break followed by draw won by Terry Tellier, returning winnings to the club
6. Treasurer's Report: Frank reports we have a healthy bank account, map sales have been steady.
7. Conservation Event: Jim Bryan announced that the Okanagan River Channel Restoration Project will celebrate a re-opening of the channel June 5, 11 a.m.at the Oliver Visitor Center. Members encouraged to attend.
8. Report from the AGM which Dennis attended as SONC rep. A) Increasing the visibility of the BC Nature Foundation. B) BC Nature to quit funding interpretive programs in parks. With drastic government cuts they feel this just enables the government to cut more dollars. C) Day Membership Fees. BC Nature encourages the collection of this fee as it adds validity to the waiver. SONC has disregarded this fee. Charmaine told Glenda that we have had very few visitors. D) SONC supported a late resolution from BC Nature opposing the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline Project and the ban on oil tankers on BC's Northern Coastal Waters.
9. National Park Reserve "YES CAMPAIGN" Doreen gave a report on this campaign, asking members for a letter drive before June 10--400 letters or more needed to impress ministers concerned to promote a YES decision for a park. ECO bags were distributed to those willing to write letters of support.
10. Trips: Mits reported the next few events are: day trip to Myers Lake, 4 day trip to Creston Wildlife Center mid June and 3 day

trip to Osprey Lake, staying at the Tellier Resort at end of June.

11. June Picnic: Marlene has reserved the shelter site (cost \$25 +GST) at the Research Station gardens for June 20 from 4 to 8 pm. This is a pot luck picnic, coffee provided.

Critter Count is June 5 –see for more info.

Next meeting September 23.

Secretary: Marlene Hikichi

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT JUNE 2010

As Doreen Olson explained to us at our May meeting, letters to Environment Minister Jim Prentice are needed to bring about the establishment of the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park. Bob Handfield drafted such a letter for Glenda to sign on behalf of SONC. It is just as important for individual members to write and send our own letters as well, and several of us on the Conservation Committee have done so recently. Doreen may have written an article about such letters elsewhere in this issue of the Honker and if so, please follow her directions. Otherwise, your letter should be addressed to The Honourable J. Prentice, Minister of Environment and cc'd to: The Hon. S. Day, M.P.; W. Barisoff , M.L.A.; J. Slater, M.L.A.; and B. Penner, BC Minister of the Environment. Please call Doreen or Jim Bryan if you want further information about the proposed national park or letters supporting its establishment.

Jim Bryan attended the ceremony to celebrate completion of the initial phase of Okanagan River restoration near Oliver. Two of the original meanders were re-created and joined to the channelized river. This provided good habitat for spawning and rearing of salmon as well as other fish species. In addition the dyke was moved back away from the artificial channel which had been made in the 1950s for flood control. The new setback for the dyke away from both river channels allowed for additional riparian habitat suitable for amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds which require riparian habitat for some or all of their life history.

This restoration project has taken nearly a decade to complete Phase 1. It was necessary to purchase several parcels of land along the

river. It was also necessary to design the new meander channels so that their slope and gravel substrates are appropriate for spawning salmon. Design and re-creation of wetland and riparian areas also required attention to the suitability and natural features of the existing areas in order to achieve a good balance of habitats. The new channels along with some riparian habitat are shown in the pictures accompanying this article.

Many people and organizations assisted with this project to restore part of the original Okanagan River. One of them who played a major role is SONC member Chris Bull. Chris seized several opportunities to arrange for purchase of key properties from landowners to enable the project, and Chris found sources of funding among several different governments and private foundations. The project required a total expenditure of about \$2 million which came mostly from Canada, BC, and US governments as well as Okanagan Nation Alliance and private foundations. Funding sources and participants in the project are listed on the sign by the river channels pictured in this Honker, although perhaps not legible in the picture.

As I described at our May meeting, BC Parks has been seriously underfunded for the last decade and many consequences are becoming very obvious in the infrastructures which are no longer functional. This is described in the latest issue (Fall 2009) of the report by BC Outdoor Recreation Council of which BC Nature is a member. SONC has a copy of this report and it is available on their website: (http://www.orcbc.ca/pub_list.htm). If any of you feel so inclined, please consider writing a letter to your MLA and/or Minister of Parks asking that funding be restored to former levels. Such letters would be particularly useful if you experience less than satisfactory facilities or service at a BC Park yourself.

Your Conservation Committee is always open to new members and new ideas. There are five of us at present, including: Jim Shaver, Jim Turnbull, Gordon Howat, Dennis St. John, and Jim Bryan. Let us know if you learn of anything we should investigate or act upon.

Jim Bryan - Conservation Chair



Information sign describing the restored meander channels. Note the riparian vegetation surrounding it.



Water flowing from the channelized reach into the restored meander channel. Note the nice riffle area at the head of the meander.

OKANAGAN BIG DAY CHALLENGE

The 25th annual Okanagan Big Day Challenge was held on Sunday, May 23rd. Eight teams totalling 31 birders took part. For the third year, this was a "green" event with all teams either walking (1 team), biking (5 teams) or driving within a 24-km diameter circle (2 teams). Two of the biking teams did the Challenge in true NMT style, starting and finishing at their home base. The weather was nasty at high elevations, with cold winds and snow in places, but generally fine in the valley with a few rainstorms to dodge.

The coveted Flammulated Owl trophy for most species went to the "Grebeless Coots"

(Eva Durance, Glenda Ross, Bob McKay) who tallied 137 species on a route starting high up on McKinney Road and finishing in the Oliver-Osoyoos area. The Kootenay Kup for second place went to the "Cold-toed Trail-mix Peckers" (Russell Cannings, Sam Brett, Anna Milner, Ryan Macindoe) with 135 species. The award for best list by a walking team went to Doug Brown who found 116 species in the Osoyoos area while walking 58 km. The new NMT award went to the "Little Behinds" (Dick Cannings, Nancy Baron, Michelle Hamilton, Grant Halm) who tallied 124 species cycling from Penticton to Oliver--and back again. The Critter Cup went to the "Thoroughly Chafed Chickadees" who saw a weasel while cycling down from Naramata. Laurie Rockwell got the Little Big Day Award for tallying 71 species by noon (in NMT fashion) around Summerland. The Bird of the Day Award went to "Chris's Covey", a large group of birders led by Chris Charlesworth, who spotted a Prairie Falcon near Oliver. The Grebeless Coots matched their top award with the Sour Grapes Award for missing Marsh Wren (although judging from their name, they also missed grebes entirely, a tough thing to do while scanning Vaseux Lake).

Other bird highlights included: American Redstart seen on Mt. Kobau by Doug Brown; Least Flycatcher (Doug Brown, Kilpoola Lake); Red-necked Phalarope (Doug Brown, Osoyoos Sewage Lagoons); Peregrine Falcon (Russell Cannings, The Throne); Trumpeter Swan (various teams, 3 flying over Oliver-Osoyoos area); Bewick's Wren (Bob McKay et al., Inkanep Park).

The participants celebrated their accomplishments at the traditional Monday morning brunch held at the Cannings house, and thousands of dollars were raised through the Baillie Birdathon for projects such as the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory. If you're interested in participating next year, mark down May 22nd on your calendar!

Cheers - Dick Cannings

SOUTH OKANAGAN HABITAT GARDEN CLEAN-UP AND WEEDING SCHEDULE 2010

The Habitat Garden at Okanagan College has had quite the growing season with all the rain this spring! As well as the native plants and

cheat grass other “weeds” have flourished. If you can spare an hour on one of the following Saturdays your help would be appreciated. We meet in the garden at 9:00 am.

June 26 July 10, 24

August 21 September 11, 25

Be sure to check out the cactus patch on the north side of the long berm as it will be flowering soon.

The Okanagan College Penticton campus celebrated Earth Day with a garbage clean-up of the Habitat Garden. For two weeks leading up to April 22 students from the student union executive, staff, and Diane Henderson’s Biology 011 class collected trash. The Biology 011 class did a brief analysis of the trash (50% paper, 45% plastic, 2% metals, and 3% other including cigarettes and styrofoam). Each year Diane uses the Habitat Garden for the ecology portion of the Biology 011 course. Her students appreciate the opportunity to observe and study plants in their natural setting.

The OC campus also celebrated Earth Day by collecting approximately 1,250 recyclable plastic bags in the two weeks prior to April 22.

Joyce Hoglund



(left to right) Diane Henderson and students Sarah, Kate, Miranda, Pam, Morgan, Jenna, Marla, Johanna



Pam

nature calls



THANK YOU to Berry Wijdeven

CALLIOPE EXPERIENCE

I have just had the most lovely experience. I just got home from making the BCNature presentation to Mike Roberts with some of our SONC members and noticed a calliope hummingbird on the porch deck looking like it was near death. I suspect it had hit the window. I picked it up and held it cupped in my hand to warm it up. I could feel it's little heart beating then didn't feel the heartbeat any longer. I looked at it's eyes and they were closed (wondered if it was in a torpor state). After a few minutes I opened my hand hoping that the bird would fly off. No, it's little wings were drooping and partially open so I gently moved them back close to the body and cupped my hand again around this little female. Having lots of work to do I came into the house and started to use one hand to answer emails. Suddenly I felt the heartbeat again and little scratching of her feet so I went outside again and opened my hand. She sat there looking much brighter than before, little eyes open wide and wings tucked at her side but her body feathers were fluffed up and her posture was not quite right. So I closed my hand around her again. A few minutes later I opened my hand again. Now she was looking very normal and after a few seconds of looking around she pooped then chirped and then flew directly to the feeder. Ahhhhh what a lovely experience to remember.

Doreen

MEMBERSHIPS!

Membership year runs from Oct 1 to Sept. 30. Membership entitles you to all Club functions, the Honker and the quarterly magazine, B.C.Nature

Please submit your fees at the next meeting or mail to SONC, PO Box 23050, Penticton, BC, V2A 8L7... Want to receive your copy of the HONKER on line? email Bob Handfield: bobnmarg@telus.net

THE PLANETS

Start with planet Earth, which has just passed the point in its orbit at which its north pole points as close to the Sun as it can. The hot days of summer stretch for a few months after that, but the days are already getting shorter. Close to the time of solstice the change is hardly noticeable -- one week after solstice the length of the day, from sunrise to sunset, is three minutes less. Interestingly, the shrinking of daylight hours is not symmetric, and during that week the time of sunset does not change at all. The shorter day shows only as sunrise coming later.

Then for the other planets, which we see from a slightly greater distance than we do planet Earth. They appear as stars in the sky, rather than the ground beneath our feet.

In the evening, for those up late enough to enjoy darkness falling, there is quite a lineup of planets in the west, mixed in with a couple of bright stars. Strung out across the sky from west to south-west are Venus, Regulus, Mars, Saturn, and Spica. Venus is stunningly brilliant; the rest are what you would call "bright stars". The two stars in that lineup, Regulus in the constellation of Leo, and Spica in the constellation of Virgo, are blue in colour, twinkling noticeably. Mars is reddish, and Saturn yellow, and both those planets shine with a more steady light. Venus is so brilliant it is difficult to compare with the others.

During the summer the pattern of the lineup changes. First, the whole gubbins shifts to the west with the season, and by early September Regulus will be lost to us in the twilight glow, and Spica will be so low in the south-west after sunset that it will, essentially, also be lost to our view by then. The planets take part in that shift, but superimpose on it their own motions as well.

In August they (Venus, Mars, Saturn) will all draw closer together, or at least as it appears on the sky, getting quite close to Spica toward the end of that month. This is a clustering that the three planets embarked upon last winter, and it has taken them this long to accomplish the feat.

Jupiter is not part of this stunt. This summer Jupiter is a morning object. At present it appears high in the south-east in the pre-dawn sky. Toward the end of summer it will transform to an all-nighter, rising at 9:00 o'clock or so, and slowly crossing the sky to appear in the south-west as the sky starts to get light.

Dr Chris Purton



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NEW CONDOMINIUM STRUCTURE BUILT IN WETLAND

Waterfront property is prime real estate, so who not build a luxury condominium structure – for bats! At Duck Lake, on the Wildlife Management Area property, bats were utilizing an old and somewhat dilapidated barn as a summer maternity roost. Unfortunately the roof of the barn was caving in becoming potential

hazard to both the public and wildlife using it, so it was taken down. Not wanting to lose the habitat, a new bat condo was built and erected in its place. This new structure should provide sufficient habitat for the bats to roost in.

Many of the bats utilizing the barn were Yuma and Little Brown Bats. Yuma bats typically form their maternal colonies in buildings, trees and under south facing siding and shingles. Their diet consists of water hatching insects. They can eat up to 600 mosquitoes per hour...now that's insect control!

Special thanks to: Fortis BC for donating 4 telephone poles; Ministry of Environment for the funding of the bat condo project; and Paul van Deursen for a great job building it!



SONC SPEAKER LIST

Meet at: Penticton United Church,
696 Main St

Speaker at 7:30pm.

See you 4th Thursday in September
September 23, 2010 - Dr. George Scotter of
Kelowna will present a slide show titled

NAHANNI - PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The Nahanni National Park Reserve is now nearly seven times the size of the original established in 1972. It permanently protects over 30,000 square Km of Boreal wilderness, an area the size of Vancouver Island. The Nahanni is now one of the world's greatest protected areas, taking its place alongside Banff and Jasper. How did this all happen? Come and hear Dr. George Scotter tell about the history of this spectacularly beautiful landscape and how it became a park. He was a member of the original team that studied the area for its national park potential.



Bob Handfield – recipient of BC Nature Club
Service Award 2010

Mike Roberts - recipient of BC Nature
Recognition Award. 2010

"Who loves a garden
Finds within his soul
Life's whole;
He hears the anthem of the soil
While ingrates toil;
And sees beyond his little sphere
The waving fronds of heaven, clear."
- Louise Seymour Jones

SPRING-SUMMER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2010

June 27, Sunday: Osprey Lake. An option of going to Greg and Terry's Fishing camp on Saturday, Take bicycles along and bird further along the road to Princeton and staying overnite in their cabins.

Meet up with birders who come up on Sunday.

Leader: Mits Hikichi and

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 9 AM

July 11, Sunday Explore the Ashnola River Valley, (about 4 km level hike.)

Leader- Mits Hikichi –details to be sent out later

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 9 AM

July 18, Sunday Apex Mtn. Hike (about 5 km uphill and 5 down, moderate

Leader- Mits Hikichi

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 9 AM

August 8, Sunday Vernon, Kal Park, Otter Lake, etc (easy)

Leader: Mits Hikichi

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 8 AM

August 22, Sunday Princeton area

Leader: Mits Hikichi - details later.

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 8 AM

Sept 10, 11, 12 New Denver Garlic Festival .

Leader - Elsie Sanderud

Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 8 AM

Further field trips may be added as people request.

Please contact trip leaders or Joyce Hoglund (492-0512), hoglundj@telus.net ; Charmaine Foster (493-1772) gramfos@shaw.ca; : Mits Hikichi (494-8731) mhikichi@vip.net ; for details of trip, relative difficulty, or any further information.

Please pre-register with trip leader well in advance of the departure date to allow planning for transportation, etc. especially for multi-day trips. We will email membership well ahead of planned outings to remind you and also allow you to plan ahead.

Wednesday, June 16, 2010 *Oliver Chronicle* A13

NEWS

Harold King is honoured for his unparalleled work and contribution towards BC nature

Contributed
To the Chronicle

Harold King was recently given the prestigious Elton Anderson award from BC Nature, the Federation of BC Naturalists. Each year BC Nature presents this award to honour the service of a member of BC Nature who has emulated, to a profound degree, the dedication, devotion, and energy exhibited by Elton Anderson, to further the aims and activities of BC Nature across the province.

It was formally presented to Harold on Monday, June 7, at the Osoyoos Senior Centre by Pat Westheuser, the awards chair of BC Nature. Harold has lived in the South Okanagan for 80 years, during which time he has made knowledge and protection of nature a way of life and has willingly passed on his knowledge to others, as shown by the fifty friends and colleagues who were at the celebration.

He has been involved in Scouting for 35 or more years from Scout through Scout header and Scout commissioner.

He has been a member of the Oliver-Osoyoos Naturalist Club since 1978, serving various capacities as director, vice-president, president and corresponding secretary and ongoing club representative to BC Nature since 1990. The club was aided by Elton Anderson in its establishment in 1973.

Harold has been a director of the Okana-

gan Similkameen Parks Society for at least 20 years and an acting chairman.

He has been Warden of Haynes Lease Reserve since 1980.

He and his late wife, Joan, coordinated the Christmas bird count for more than 10 years and Harold still provides homemade soup for the after-count feast.

He served as Environmental Representative on the West Kootenay Power Committee for transmission lines.

He is a member of the Osoyoos Desert Society and served as a director during its formative years and is still involved as an interpretive guide.

He served as the federation representative at the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) table and has done so for the past 13 years. As such Harold has attended and taken an active role in hundreds of hours of meetings.

He is part of the Smart Growth Community Planning movement.

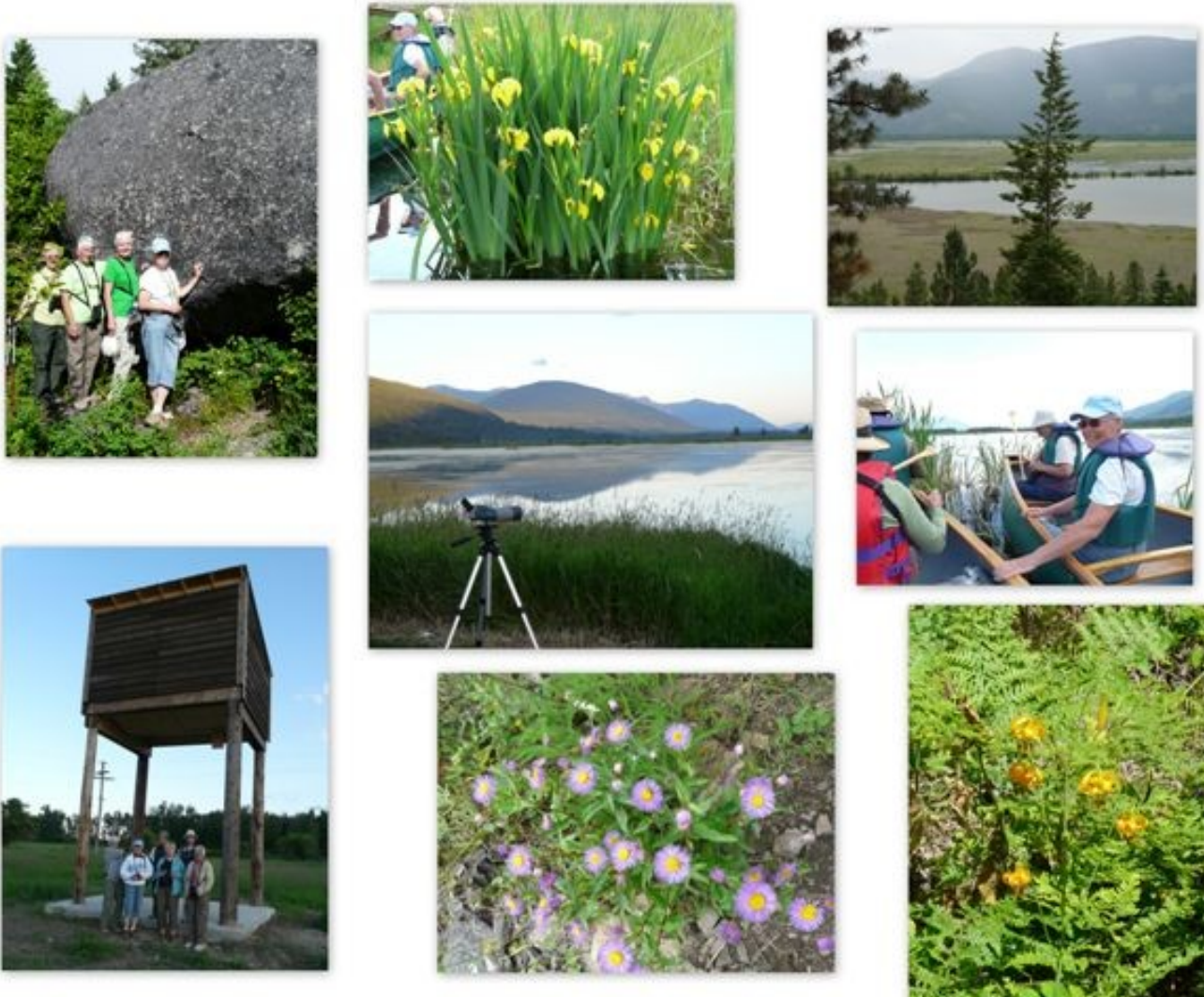
He is active in supporting establishment of a South Okanagan National Park.

In addition to the above, Harold has found time to run the family orchard, raise a family and be an active member of his church and community. Harold was awarded a Club Award in 2000 and since that time has continued his tireless work on behalf of our environment. He more than exemplifies the profound degree of dedication, devotion and energy needed to be the recipient of the Elton Anderson Award.



Photo contributed

BC Nature Awards chairperson Pat Westheuser presents Harold King with a wooden carving of a wolverine during the awards ceremony.



Seven SONC members travelled to Creston in mid-June to check out the area for future visits. We were able to check out a few points of interest including Columbia brewery, Wildlife Management Area, Sirdar Pub, various ethnic eating establishments (whatever priority you want to choose.) The drive to and from Creston is very interesting and it would take many hours more to stop in at all the inviting places. The Management Area is huge and it would take several days to cover all the trails. Participants were Alice Pringle, Barb Pomeroy, Charmaine Foster, Donna Finnestad, Elsie Sanderud, Marlene and Mits Hikichi

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER

REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER SONC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION // RENEWAL FORM

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club P.O. Box 23050, Penticton, BC, V2A 8L7

\$30 - Individual

\$40 – Family

DATE: _____

NAME: _____ PHONE #: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

(do you wish to receive your HONKER on line?) _____

All members receive our SONC newsletter, the Honker. SONC is a member of BC Nature and SONC

members receive quarterly issues of their newsletter, B.C. NATURE.