



The HONKER

Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

September 2010



Bobcat (*lynx rufus*)-photo by Maggie Handfield

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SEPTEMBER IS THE START OF OUR NEW MEMBERSHIP YEAR
SEE BACK PAGE FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM



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 (see elsewhere in this issue). 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:

President: Glenda Ross 250.493.7500 glendaross@shaw.ca
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 Past President: Bob Handfield 250.497.8702
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 Jim Turnbull 250.496.4195 jim.turnbull@telus.net

Newsletter Submission Dates:

The 15th of: January/March/June/September/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

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 Joyce Hoglund

Cover Photo: The bobcat is North America's most common wild cat, ranging from Mexico to southern Canada. With an estimated population of close to 1 million in the wild, bobcats perform a valuable service in helping to keep rabbit and rodent populations in check. Although Maggie Handfield "shot" this one in southern Texas last January they are seen in the Okanagan Valley.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2010

WELCOME BACK!! Wow, where does the time go? OK, summer was late in coming but it did make up for it with a very hot spell. The hikes throughout the summer months looked promising – unfortunately I was not able to take them in due to work, and more work! From what I have heard, there were some great outings. Thanks so much to the crew for setting them up. Fortunately with the coming of Fall the speaker season returns and Anthea Bryan has come up with a very interesting line up for us. With our new season upon us don't forget our Conservation Committee and if you can offer to help please contact Jim Bryan.

I was fortunate to take in most of our picnic this year and spend quality time with most of the group. Unfortunately it was to be the last time I got to spend with Sam. He was a wonderful person whose time with us was much too short – he will be missed. My condolences to Evalyn and all of Sam's family.

Moving on with our summer, Bob Handfield returned from holidays just in time to help Frank Focken organize our Ironman cleanup – Bob says Frank did all of the hard work so many thanks to Frank & Bob for arranging & organizing this year's event and to all of you that helped with the clean-up. The money earned will go toward our Bursary & Science Fair Award. We will be putting our name in for next year so if you missed the fun this year, please don't hesitate to help us then!

Doreen Olson has been a small powerhouse all her own. She has helped endlessly with many of our projects and keeps on top of many others. Since conception, the proposed South Okanagan National Park has taken up most of her time. With this, I'm pleased to see an update from Parks Canada in this issue. Another project involving Doreen is upcoming – a teacher from Kelowna's KLO Middle School is planning to bring her class here to see the proposed National Park Reserve first hand. Doreen has already lined up a great event – when plans come to fruition we'll be asking for more involvement from our members.

Dick Cannings has been instrumental in updating the Checklist of the Birds of the Okanagan Valley which was reprinted this Spring. If you don't have an updated copy you can purchase one from Bob or Frank. With these we have a rapidly dwindling supply of the "hot" Okanagan Valley Birding Trail guide, also available from Bob or Frank.

Bob has been yet another of our members who goes all out for SONC. Our Naturalist club will be celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2012 and will be looking for ways to mark this occasion. Bob and Doreen have offered to chair this new committee. Please do get in touch with either of them if you can help out.

Coinciding with September and our Fall Season, Membership is NOW due – ask a friend to join and help us double our membership!

Glenda Ross – President

Summer Picnic

This year the SONC picnic was held on June 20th at the gazebo at the Summerland Research Station. About 40 members attended. What a terrific venue and although rain clouds threatened the weather cooperated for a most enjoyable gathering.

Inside the gazebo there is a small kitchen area where the tables were laden with more food than you could imagine. It was more a feast than a picnic. There was so much to choose from it was impossible to try every special dish members had prepared.

After the meal we enjoyed playing lawn games. One group played a game of Bocce. I think the green team won. Another group played a game of Ladder golf. While yet another group chose to just sit around and chat or watch the antics of those playing games.

At about 7:30 the weather changed. The games ended. A brave few went on a walk through the butterfly garden but the rain continued so we all decided to call it quits for the day.





Sam Maruoka
In Passing

In the short time that Sam was a member of SONC, he touched many of our lives. He joined the club in the summer of 2008 because of his interest in birds and subsequently met another birder, Evalyn Wood, with whom it bloomed into a caring relationship.

His introduction to the Okanagan occurred when he came to the Naramata centre as a young man because his mother had expectations of him becoming a minister. Needless to say, he chose another path in medical technology.

Much of Sam's life has come to light through Evalyn. The facts are that he was born in Ocean Falls in 1941 and moved to Alberta as a result of WW II. He was emphatic that they were not evacuated but relocated voluntarily. In time they moved to Ontario and his teen years were around Chatham where he excelled in athletics. He played on the 1958 Ontario Bantam Champion baseball team which included Hall of Famer Ferguson Jenkins. He showed his athletic versatility in becoming the Junior Men's tennis champion during those years.

His working life centered around Owen Sound and specifically the hospital where he started as a junior technician and worked up to be in charge of the nuclear medicine department. He is fondly remembered by the hospital staff, who paid tribute to his passing by hanging their flag at half mast.

Sam leaves three daughters, Kimi, Erin and Maki as well as many friends, relatives, co-workers, from all across Canada. He is remembered for his genuine warmth and generosity.

Submitted by Mits Hikichi

Ironman Clean-up

Once again a good turnout of Club members ensured continued funding for Club projects as we undertook the task of cleaning up Eastside Road after the Ironman race. About 24 members made short work of the 13 km stretch of road between Skaha Lake Park and Okanagan Falls. Besides the usual Ironman race debris (cups, power bar papers, etc) there was quite an interesting variety of other garbage. Mits & Marlene found a new bike in the ditch which was turned over to the police. Other stuff included a 4 litre jug of chainsaw oil, a box from a new set of binoculars and miscellaneous bits of almost everything. Many of the participants met afterwards at Tim Hortons. As a result of our efforts Ironman will make a donation of \$500 to the Club.



Future Speakers

**Oct. 28: BIRDS AND BEASTS OF
OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN PARK -
BEFORE AND AFTER THE FIRESTORM.**

Members of CONC have conducted the Okanagan Mountain Park critter count annually since 1994 along with the South Okanagan Naturalists. CONC member and wildlife biologist Les Gyug will highlight the results of those annual counts, and show the rather dramatic and surprising effects of the 2003 fires on the birds and other animals in and near the park.

Editor's Comment

You can see that I've made a few changes in the format of the Honker this month. I thought I might experiment with various changes over the coming months. Feel free to let me know what you think about the "revised" Honker.

Bob Handfield



National Park Reserve Feasibility Assessment

South Okanagan Lower Similkameen

Summer 2010

Since 2004, Parks Canada and the Province of British Columbia have been cooperating to assess the feasibility of establishing a national park reserve in the South Okanagan and Lower Similkameen area. Since we have not provided a public update for some time, this handout describes some work-in-progress.

What has been done

Over the past 6 years we have completed technical reports on topics ranging from conservation values to social and economic studies. We have worked with the Okanagan Nation and local bands to begin to understand their perspectives on protecting and caretaking the land.

We introduced a Draft Park Concept in 2006, and gathered local feedback from open houses, forums, workshops and meetings. We talked with stakeholders and communities to better understand where common interests and the national park concept come together.

While many people supported protection of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the area, some local residents felt that the draft proposal was too much of a change – too large, too fast, too much. We have now

taken some time to carefully consider and address all input that has been received.

What we've been doing, and What's New

Over the past 2 years we have sought renewed involvement of the Okanagan Nation and local bands to explore common interests and a mutually agreeable approach to conclude the feasibility study.

Working with representatives of provincial agencies who currently manage Crown land, we collaborated to build new ideas and consider the merits of a new approach. There is more work to be done, but here is an update on changes to the 2006 Draft Park Concept.

1. Focus on a smaller area

The 2006 Draft Park Concept included 3 areas, totaling about 650 sq km in size:

1. **Western Component** - West of the Similkameen Valley (around Snowy Protected Area),
2. **Eastern Component** - Between the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys (around South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area),
3. **Northern Component** - Federal lands around Vaseux Lake.

Although the western component has important natural and cultural values, it is not included in the new area of focus.



2010 Draft Park Concept
Focus on **Northern (Vaseux)** and **Eastern (South Okanagan Grasslands)** components





2. Relationships with the ranching community

The 2006 Draft Park Concept proposed a phase-out of cattle grazing in a transition leading to national park establishment. While this approach was consistent with current national park policy, it did not fully acknowledge the role of ranching in the local community and in the BC interior.

Discussions between range managers, ecosystem scientists, researchers, park managers and others have helped us to build principles of a new approach to grazing that should help to address concerns of the ranching community, and result in a national park reserve proposal that is more reflective of the way of life on Canada's Interior Dry Plateau.

In the new approach, grazing would continue, would be managed adaptively and would be guided by science to ensure achievement of park goals (including goals for ecological health, research, learning, cultural heritage and park visitor experience). This 'adaptive management' approach shifts more focus towards:

- learning and sharing knowledge about grazing and ecological health;
- the social, cultural and environmental roles of ranching and grazing in the broad ecosystem; and
- partnerships and collaboration with ranchers.

No ranches or associated tenures would be expropriated, and any land acquisition for the national park would be based on a willing-seller, willing-buyer approach.

Next steps include further discussions with affected ranchers and other stakeholders.

3. Taking time to build relationships

We are taking time to rebuild a relationship with local bands that will be strong and last into the future. To begin with, we are looking at other places where Parks

Canada is working with aboriginal peoples to meet common interests in the land, the people and the stories.

There are also many stakeholders with interest in the future of the area, including hunters, recreation users, mineral interests, water users, conservation groups and community residents. Many of these stakeholders were engaged in earlier phases of the feasibility assessment, and will continue to be involved.

4. Timely conclusion of the feasibility assessment

Never has a national park feasibility study been undertaken in a more complex place, with such a rich diversity of natural and cultural values and multi-stakeholder interests, yet under such pressure from rapid land use change. While relationships take time, the land is being affected by numerous changes, and time is of the essence to conclude the feasibility assessment.

In this area of local, provincial, national and international conservation significance, Parks Canada and the Province of British Columbia have common interests in healthy ecosystems and healthy rural communities. Next steps include engagement of local bands to conclude the feasibility assessment and design a path forward.

For further information

Please see the project website:
www.pc.gc.ca/sols

Contact: Debbie Clarke, Project Manager
Email: Debbie.Clarke@pc.gc.ca
Phone: 250-490-2238 or 1-877-490-2238
102 Industrial Way, Penticton, BC V2C 7C8

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The Heavens

For planets this season, Jupiter is it. He will be the sole representative of the bright planets in our night sky. He handles the responsibility pretty well, though, standing bright and steady in the eastern sky as darkness falls, then majestically crossing the sky, east to west, during the rest of the night. In the middle of the night he is quite magnificent, high in the south and taking command of the whole sky.

To put that the other way 'round: that bright thing you're seeing in the eastern sky in the evening is Jupiter. The little circlet of five stars just above him is one end of the constellation Pisces, and above that, on a much grander scale, the enormous Great Square of Pegasus.

If you have your binoculars with you, there is a really interesting thing to see in that part of the sky. First, note the four stars of the Great Square, how bright they are, and the (apparent) distance between them. Then scan across the top of the square and off to the left, to a star about the same brightness and the same (apparent) distance from the Square. If you continue to the left, to another star of same brightness and the same (apparent) distance from the first one, you will have traversed the constellation of Andromeda. But the object of interest is near the first star: when you get to that one, take a sharp right turn and a short distance above it find a fainter star, then about as far again to another similar star. Very close to that second faint star, just above and to the right of it, is a faint fuzzy patch. You've found the Great Galaxy in Andromeda.

The Andromeda Galaxy is actually visible to the naked eye, in a dark location on a good night, and is the most distant object the human eye can see. It is another galaxy, similar to our own, and the only thing we can see with our eyes (from the northern hemisphere) that is outside our Galaxy. But it looks a lot better, and is easier to see, through binoculars.

The Andromeda Galaxy and Jupiter form quite a contrast. Jupiter blazingly bright, commanding the whole sky, the AG so faint you can only just see it under good conditions. Jupiter a planet in thrall to the Sun, the AG an entire galaxy of two hundred billion such suns. Jupiter right in our backyard, celestially speaking, only 36 light minutes away -- compared to the Andromeda Galaxy at two million light years! When you train your binoculars on the AG you're trapping light that has been traveling through space for two million years.

The Andromeda Galaxy does it for me. It is magnificent in its faint fuzzy way, and absolutely awe inspiring once you realize what it is. Enjoy!

Chris Purton



Club Outings and Ride-sharing

Many Club members kindly help out with transportation at various Club outings by sharing their rides. As we all know, operating a motor vehicle these days is a considerable expense with fuel being only a small part of the costs.

After considerable discussion amongst the Board members and those involved in the Thursday birding group it was thought appropriate to suggest a donation by people sharing rides based on the following formula: the driver of the vehicle will keep track of the mileage driven on each trip and that will be multiplied by up to \$0.25 (25 cents) per kilometre. The resulting total would be divided by the number of riders resulting in a suggested donation amount for that trip.



Conservation Committee Report

Birds and plants near Little Tunnel, KVR Trail

In August several members became aware of a proposal by an outdoor adventure tourism company to offer tours and guided climbing near the Little Tunnel on the old KVR corridor. The public notice gave only a week for public comment on the proposal but some of you expressed concern for birds and plants in the vicinities by emailing the agency. Jim Bryan penned a letter on behalf of SONC advocating the need for an Environmental Assessment before granting the necessary authorizations for this new activity. Jim and Bob Handfield will be doing some checking about the unreasonably short lead time for public comment on the proposal.

Deficiencies in BC Parks

In the June Honker you were asked to note any deficiencies in facilities or services experienced over the summer and to consider making our government aware of them. If you made any such observations but do not want to write a letter yourself, let Jim Bryan know and he will write a letter giving the details. Jim noticed that the trail through Okanagan Mountain Park to Divide Lake had not been cleared for several years, so had numerous deadfalls of large trees. This contrasted with the trail from Murtle Lake to the Wavy Alpine which had been cleared this year. No park ranger resided in Cathedral Lake Park for five days during the peak season; formerly there were often two rangers resident there during the peak season.

Municipal Planning Issues

Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, RDOS, approved the Regional Growth Strategy in April of this year. James Moore, the planner for RDOS who developed the Regional Growth Strategy reported that there no major changes were made from the draft document which many SONC members reviewed and commented on at the public meeting in December 2009. This document will help protect environmental values around our communities as our urban areas expand. Another welcome change to urban planning in our communities is the arrival of a new shared environmental planner, Anna McIndoe. She will split her time among mainly Keremeos, Summerland, Penticton, and Oliver. One of her responsibilities is to ensure that staff, officials, and residents of these municipalities are aware of important plant and animal species which could be affected by their land use decisions in their respective municipalities, as well as to establish proactive municipal planning tools to conserve nature.

The decision to collaboratively fund and share this environmental planning position came about through partnership within the SOSCP (South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program).

RDOS has issued a permit for restoration of the riparian area at Sickle Point on Skaha Lake (The Review, 19Aug2010). In 2009 the property owner, Mel Reeves, had begun denuding the riparian area before receiving authorization from RDOS. Many Kaleden residents including several SONC members including the Handfields and Howards lobbied all levels of government to stop the illegal development. This restoration project will take place this fall through next spring and will be supervised by an environmental professional (The Review, 19Aug2010).

Look for an article about recent developments on the National Park proposal elsewhere in this Honker. A meeting of the Conservation Committee will be held in October. If you would like to join the committee, please tell Jim Bryan so that we can select an appropriate date. If you have a conservation issue in need of investigation or action, please join us or tell one of us (Jim Shaver, Jim Turnbull, Gordon Howat, Dennis St. John, and Jim Bryan) about the issue.

Jim Bryan, Conservation Committee Chair

editor's note: The RDOS announced on Sept 21 that they are doing away with the regional environmental planner position as part of a move to reduce staff and save money.

Osprey Lake Outing

Club members truly had a great outing at Tellier's Fisherman's Cove at Osprey Lake. June 25 to 27th saw just the right weather for the annual outing with 10 members arriving for a nice relaxing evening on Friday. Saturday saw THE BIKERS ready to head to Princeton from Osprey Lake. Our support vehicle met them at different locations with water and lunches. The lunch was at Erris Tunnel which overlooks the Princeton valley. Lupine Lane was in full blossom as the riders made their way down the Jura Loops and the end of the trail at Swan Lake.

We packed the bikes up and everyone headed back to Tellier's for a nice supper and campfire with some of the local neighbours.

Sunday morning another 7 SONC members joined the rest of us for a bird and flower walk around Osprey Lake and into the community. Lunch completed the day while everyone compared notes on their favourite sightings of the day.

Terry and I would like to thank everyone who participated in these activities and we look forward to another adventure with SONC members next year.

Greg & Terry Tellier



On the KVR Trail - Osprey Lake Outing



Around the Campfire at Tellier's Resort



We do live in wine country after-all!



Lupine lane - KVR Trail



Just what is Jim Ginns illustrating?



FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 2010

October 7, 2010 (Thursday)

This is a regular Thursday birding day but we would like to use it for going to view the Adams River Sockeye run. We thought it best for Thursday as the weekends would be very crowded. The driving distance from Penticton to Roderick Haig-Brown Park is about 225 km one way. It will be an 8AM leaving time from Warren and Atkinson and about a three hour journey. Expect to get home about 6 PM. Leader- Mits Hikichi

Oct 17, 2010 (Sunday)

Travel to Princeton and area to experience fall colors. Walk the railbed along the Similkameen River, about 3 km roundtrip to see the Vermillion bluffs (red ochre). Swan Lake bird sanctuary is on the list and any other points of interest. Let's play it by ear. There has been a suggestion to carry on to Coalmont and up to Tulameen, Otter lake, Aspen Grove and home via the Connector. Meet at Warren and Atkinson at 8 AM. Leader - Mits Hikichi

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



REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER

SONC Membership application/renewal form

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club, PO Box 23050 Penticton BC V2A 8L7

Individual.....\$30

Family.....\$40

Date: _____

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Do you wish to receive your Honker on line? _____