



the Wetlander

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

SPRING 2007



Our Mission

We exist to manage the Creston Valley Management Area, a 17,000 acre wetland of international significance, for conservation and natural species diversity through active habitat and wildlife management, research, education and public support.

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To log or not to log? An update on the Corn Creek Forest

From Marc-André Beaucher

On December 14th, 2006, the CVWMA held an open house at the West Creston Hall to gather comments from the public regarding a proposal to conduct habitat restoration work in a coniferous forest (30 ha) located in the southwest corner of Corn Creek Marsh – pond 3. The project proposal arose from concerns raised by a local logger who reported the presence of fir engraver beetles and several dead Grand Firs in the area.

A follow up by the CVWMA resulted in consulting with a registered professional forester and drafting a selective timber harvesting plan that called for removing approximately 3300 cubic meters of wood, or close to one-third of the total forest volume. The plan was presented and discussed at the December meeting with nearly 30 people who attended.

The initial public consultation followed by a comment period clearly indicated that many people are not in favor of the proposed project. As part of the decision-making process, a Level 1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), based on the BC Parks model, was also completed in late February (presently under review). Combined, these steps will help the CVWMA determine whether the project should be abandoned or pursued.

If pursued, a Level 2 EIA conducted by a third party will most likely be required.

We will keep you updated on the progress of this proposal. Any future public meetings will be advertised in the Creston

Valley Advance newspaper and on our website.

If you have questions or comments please contact Marc-André Beaucher at: biology@crestonwildlife.ca or (250) 402 6902.



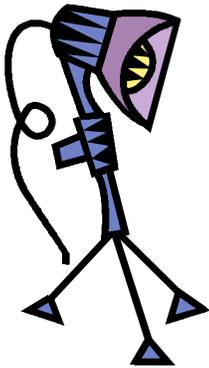
Map showing location of proposed habitat restoration work



Let us know what you think...
Contact Carla Haegele, Editor
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Donors in the Spotlight...



“Donors in the Spotlight” is a new series in the *Wetlander* that highlights one of our donors in each issue. To kick start it off is BC Hydro!

Article submitted by BC Hydro

BC Hydro has been a supporter of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA) since 1998, and appreciates the effort and work being completed in the area by the group.

“The CVWMA is recognized as a wetland of international importance, and is home to 286 bird species, 57 mammals, and 29 fish, reptile and amphibian species, not to mention the thousands of invertebrate and plant species,” said Maureen DeHaan, BC Hydro Environment and Social Issues Manager.

The work being completed by the group includes habitat creation and management, stewardship programs, education programs for youth, and work to reestablish endangered species. All of these programs are in line with BC Hydro long-term goals of environmental responsibility, and working to minimize the impact of its facilities through habitat restoration and stewardship.



Presenting the cheque to Marc-André Beaucher, CVWMA Area Manager, is Diane Tammen (left), Community Relations Manager, BC Hydro and Maureen DeHaan, Environment and Social Issues Manager, BC Hydro

“By supporting the CVWMA, we are not only supporting an excel-

lent local initiative, but also supporting BC Hydro’s long-term goals by helping to offset the impact of its operations in the region,” added DeHaan. “We are supporting the CVWMA again this year, our ninth consecutive year of support, and are pleased to be able to provide \$361,617.”

BC Hydro Outreach program contributes to non-profit organizations providing direct services, programs and opportunities that contribute to the vitality and well-being of communities throughout British Columbia. Through its corporate and regional donations programs, BC Hydro provides financial support to registered charities and not-for-profit organizations and First Nations Bands focused on environmental, educational and community investment initiatives. To learn more about BC Hydro's outreach initiatives and donations, visit www.bchydro.com/outreach.

Bug Quiz... it's a numbers game...



What insect can leap 200 times its body length?

a flea b grasshopper c springtail

If you were a rhinoceros beetle, you could carry up to how many times your own body weight?

a 120 b 400 c 850



Which insect is the loudest with calls reaching 120 decibels?

a cicada b stag beetle c cricket

A dragonfly is the fastest flying insect with speeds of up to:

a 28 km/hr b 57 km/hr c 80 km/hr

Insects make up what percentage of all known animal species on earth?

a 60% b 70% c 85%



The answers can be found on page 6

New Publication Schedule...

To make our publications more efficient and timely, we have rearranged the dates and frequency of the *Wetlander* and Annual Report. There will be 3 *Wetlanders* a year: April, July and November. The Annual Report will be an insert in the July issue of the *Wetlander*.

This July, the Annual Report will cover the 2005/06 and the 2006/07 fiscal years.

Special Thanks to Some of our Project Partners...

Osprey Nest Web Cam

A pair of unsuspecting ospreys nesting at the Wildlife Area had no idea they would receive global exposure! Ospreys return to the wetland in early April after spending a winter in Mexico (lucky!). Two cameras, one located directly above the nest and one with a panoramic view of the nest and wetlands, will allow us an up close view as they repair winters damage, perform courtship rituals, lay eggs, and raise their young.

Generous contributions from the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (\$2,800) and the Creston Library (\$500) combined



It's a.... bird? No, it's the arborist installing the camera on the nest

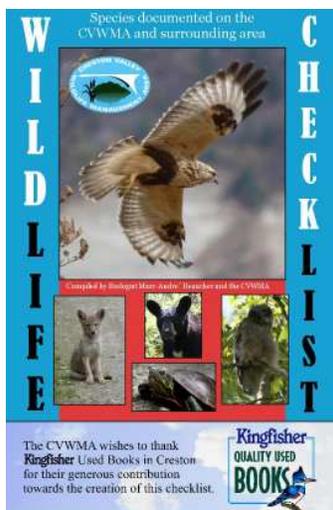
with the support of the CVWMA (\$1,000 plus) made this web cam possible. Also many thanks go out to the in-kind support of Robert Lawson (technician), Peter McLennan (photographer and film producer) and Michael Farnsworth (webmaster). The equipment was installed by Jerry Hellens, owner and operator of Creston Tree Service.

Live broadcasts can be seen (very soon) on the FWCP and CVWMA websites as well as on screens at the Wildlife Centre and the Creston Library. Check our website regularly for a launch date.

Wildlife Checklist

Updated for 2007

You are out in the wetlands with your binoculars and you spot a Flycatcher... an Alder Flycatcher? Search your bird book and check out our newly updated Wildlife Checklist to see if that species occurs in the Valley. What? It doesn't? Well, you might have to go back to the identification drawing board (maybe it was a Willow Flycatcher...they look so similar...) or else get really excited because you spotted a new visitor. With 21 new species added since the last update in 2003, it is possible.



Whether you are an expert or novice wildlife viewer, the checklist is a handy addition to local guides. The Checklist includes a large number of species: 286 birds, 57 mammals, 17 fish, 6 amphibians and 6 reptiles. That adds up to many hours (days, years) of wildlife viewing to check them all off. Something to aspire to... Download it from our website or call us for a copy.

Thanks to Joseph and Kathryn Fraser of Kingfisher Used Books in Creston for a generous \$700 donation towards the cost of printing.

Helping to keep us Afloat...

New lifejackets

For the past fifteen years, from May to September, thousands of visitors explore the wetlands of the CVWMA on guided canoe tours. Children participate in summer programs and school excursions where they paddle through the ponds and channels observing and studying this diverse and active wetland ecosystem.

Canoe tours allow these groups to get an up close view of species interactions and behaviors and learn more about the importance and management of wetland habitats. To keep our passengers safe, they are given life-

jackets and a safety lesson before embarking on the journey. After many seasons of use, our lifejackets were finally reaching the end of their lives...

In early 2007, the Creston Rotary generously donated \$2000 towards the purchase of new lifejackets. A donation from Dr. Dave Catherall of Creston and a discount from Mustang Survival Corp. in Richmond, BC allowed us to purchase new lifejackets for the upcoming season. Thank-you all!!

We are excited to suit up in our fancy new floatation devices and head out into the wetlands for another season of canoe tour fun!

Education

The upcoming season...

Discover our Wetlands...

We are getting ready (and excited) for the upcoming season. If you want a copy of our Program Guide (containing full list of programs), please call or email us or check out our website. A Program Guide will be arriving in your mailbox in mid April if you live in the Kootenay region. Here is a glimpse of some of the programs and events happening at the Wildlife Centre.



A group of avid wildlife watchers on a tour

Speaker Series

At Wildlife Centre Theatre @ 7 pm
Admission is by donation

June 14 "Amphibian Conservation in the Columbia Basin" Doug Adama, Biologist

June 28 "Wildflowers of Australia" Brent Hancock

July 12 "Ecological Value of the Flathead Valley" Casey Brennan, Wildsight

July 26 "Mountain Pine Beetle" Lorraine Maclauchlan, Forest Entomologist

Special Events

Salute to Ospreys May 26 @ 10 am
Enjoy a pancake breakfast, games, and an up close look at the ospreys on our web cam.

Bug Your Dad! June 16 @ 7 pm
Bring Dad for an evening excursion into the wetlands in search of bugs.

Summer Solstice Event June 22 @ 7 pm
A campfire night at Duck Lake!

Full Moon Paddle

July 27 & Aug 24 @ 7:30 pm

The wetland comes alive at night... Join us for a moonlit canoe ride. 8 yrs. & up.

Jr. Naturalists Programs

These curious young creatures explore the wetlands. Canoeing, hiking, dip netting and plenty of games make for a week filled with fun and adventure.



Curious Caterpillars are 6 & 7 years old
Sessions: July 9-13 and July 16-20 (9-1 pm)

Boisterous Beetles are 8 & 9 years old
Sessions: July 9-13 and July 16-20 (9-4 pm)

Coyote Howlers are 10 & 11 years old
Session: July 23-27 (9-4 pm)
Night howl sleepover on Thursday

Mallard Mornings

An invitation for parents to bring curious Ducklings, ages 3-5 years old, on a Naturalist-led outdoor adventure of discovery and fun every Tuesday.

Session: May 15-June 19 (10-11:30 am)

Canoe Tours

Join a Naturalist on an hour-long guided canoe tour through the wetlands.

Departs daily: 9:30 10:30 am 1 and 2 pm
(May 9 to June 30, Tues-Sunday and July 1 to Sept 2, 7 days a week)

Bug Display

The ECCO Centre in Kelowna has loaned us a Bug Display. If you like bugs or are curious to know more come and see this interactive, hands-on display. Even if you don't like bugs, come out and learn to love 'em!

-  Examine a honeycomb from wild bees
-  Look at a variety of collected specimens
-  Build a bug
-  View species under microscopes
-  Dress up like a bug ...and so much more



Monarch butterfly life cycle display

Join a Naturalist on a Guided Bug Walk where you will learn about insect life cycles, breeding habits, habitat needs and more. Also, collect and identify some of the wetlands quirky insect residents.

Update on Wildlife Centre Repairs

Ready, Set, Start your hammers!

The necessary funding to repair our Wildlife Centre is in place. Whoopee!!

So, what are the next steps? First, a proposal to fix the building has to go to bid. Then, once a bid is accepted, that contractor will be hired. From there, it's full steam ahead. We are aiming to start construction in early September. The Wildlife Centre will be open this season from May 9th until September 2nd (May 9 to June 30, Tuesday to Sunday; July 1 to Sept 2, 7 days a week) from 9 am to 4 pm.

The walkway project will start again once the Centre is repaired so that it does not get compromised or damaged during construction. So, for all of you who have sponsored a plank, you should see your nameplate installed in the near future. We are ever grateful for everyone's support, understanding and patience. We will keep you updated on the building repairs and walkway project.



NEWS FLASH! Critters find Internet useful!



From Michael Farnsworth, our new "Web Guy"

The CVWMA has launched a new version of its website that provides more information to potential visitors outside of the Creston Valley and will also raise the CVWMA profile in the major search engines such as Google and Yahoo. The 'net' effect and benefit of this effort will be to attract more visitors to the CVWMA.

The new website will also be launching a new interactive feature that the local agricultural community and nature enthusiasts should find very useful called 'Sightings'. The Sightings link will allow website visitors to post the location, time and species of any animal or vegetation they see that they think is worth reporting. They will also be able to upload a photo of their 'sighting' if they have one.

This new tool will provide a vehicle for visitors and local community members to help identify new species to the area as well as track returning visitors (who, where, when and how many!)

A big welcome goes out to Michael and his wife Vanessa, new migrants to the Creston Valley. The CVWMA is reaping the benefits of Michael's passion and interest in wetland habitats combined with his web-savvy ways.

On the Wild Scene

From Marc-André

The period between now and the last Wetlander was relatively quiet in terms of wildlife sightings, not meaning that wildlife was not present, but rather that nothing unusual was seen. Elk, deer, and coyotes were seen on regular basis with the occasional moose or two. River otters were also observed playing on the ice in various locations several times in the last 3 to 4 months. Bird wise, lots of Bald Eagles and Great-blue Herons were seen



Common Redpoll eating tansy seeds at Duck Lake

throughout the Area. The most exciting sightings were undoubtedly small groups of Pine Grosbeaks at Duck Lake in early December and large flocks of Common Redpolls in the same location in late February. I had not seen these two species of birds for quite a while. Finally, a dozen Trumpeter Swans swimming in a small patch of open water on Duck Lake in late February were also a treat through my binoculars. Hopefully the long winter that just ended will bring us some exotic species to enjoy for the months to come!

A Burning Question!

Q: How did the assassin bug get its name?
(This month's question comes to us from Curious Carla. Her new found interest in bugs prompted this question... Send your questions to wetlander@crestonwildlife.ca)

A: Well, in summary, they are called assassin bugs because they literally suck the life out of their prey. Very cool. Here are the details...

Assassin bugs and all other bugs in the order Hemiptera feed in a very strange way. They all have long needlelike beaks that work like sharp drinking straws. They poke the beak into their food and then suck out the food's juices. Many hemipterans feed on plant juice. The beak pierces the plant stem and sap flows into the beak; dinner is served with no harm done. However, for other hemipterans who dine on other animals, mealtime can be quite a performance (now the exciting part!).

We can assume that any insect who saw an assassin bug would probably try to get out of the way. The stealthy assassin bugs have made allowances for this. They creep up on their prey very much like a tiger does. They glide very smoothly, very slowly, until the last moment. Then, all of a sudden, their long front legs dart out like a striking rattlesnake.



A juvenile assassin bug feasting on a beetle.

The two front legs are often thicker than their back legs and many have spines to keep the prey from slipping away. Once the front legs are folded around the prey, the victim seldom moves again. The free end of the long beak easily pierces the prey, even the hard exoskeleton of a beetle, and injects a venom that both paralyzes and partially digests the prey. As the body contents of the victim liquefy, the assassin bug sucks out its dinner in the same way that you might suck a soft drink from a glass using a straw. Again, very cool.

World Wetlands Day: Feb 2, 2007

What is World Wetlands Day?

Around the world, countries celebrate February 2nd as World Wetlands Day. This day marks the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands which took place in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits. Of the 1,636 Ramsar sites around the world, 37 of these are within Canada and 3 of these are in BC: the Alaksen National Wildlife Area, Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area and the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area.



Breanne Friesen, Grade 4



Adrian Dicaire, Grade 5

How we Celebrated...

The CVWMA celebrated World Wetlands Day by holding a coloring contest in the local schools. A winner was chosen from each elementary school and a World Wetlands Day backpack was the prize. The winner's class received a presentation filled with fun games focused on the importance of wetlands. Special thanks to the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area for making the contest possible.

Breanne Friesen, a grade 4 student at Adam Robertson Elementary and Adrian Dicaire, a grade 5 student at Wynndel Elementary are just two of the winners. Congratulations and good job! Thanks to everyone who participated.

The Answers... from Bug Quiz (page 2)

- ◆ Nothing on earth can leap farther for its size than a flea. A flea is able to make jumps that are 200 times its body length (that is like a human trying to clear a 70 story building). And it can do so over and over again. One researcher demonstrated that rabbit fleas could leap once every second for three straight days without stopping. Grasshoppers can jump 80 times their length.
- ◆ Rhinoceros beetles may be the strongest animals in the world, with some capable of lifting 850 times their own weight (that would be like you trying to lift 12 elephants at once). Stag beetles are able to drag an object 120 times their own weight, ants can carry 50 times their weight, and honeybees fly with pollen loads up to 24 times their weight.
- ◆ The male cicada are said to be the loudest insects on earth. At 120 decibels, a cicada rivals a jet engine taking off (135 decibels). The noise it makes is a popping sound. It uses muscles to tighten a drum like membrane and then it presses that membrane down and then releases it so that it pops back up. A pair of resonating chambers amplifies the pop which he repeats 100 to 500 times a second to make a buzzing roar. The sound can be heard 400 meters away.
- ◆ The fastest insect, that has been reliably tested, is the dragonfly with a maximum speed of 57 km/hr. A hawk moth comes in second with a clocked speed of 54 km/hr. Note that some studies have recorded dragonflies with speeds up to 70 km/hr. The tabanid fly has been recorded at 145 km/hr (not scientifically accepted).
- ◆ Roughly 900,000 species of insects have already been scientifically described and that number represents approximately 80-85 percent of all known animal species. Some scientists believe that there are approximately 3 million different kinds of insects alive today. Others claim the total number to be closer to 30 million.

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You light up our lives!

A big THANK-YOU to
Fortis BC



for supplying and installing energy efficient light bulbs and thermostats at the Wildlife Centre and the Administration Building. Did you know that energy efficient light bulbs are responsible for about an 80% reduction in electricity costs? And they last 8—15 times longer.