

Comox Valley Naturalists Society

March 2015 Newsletter



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President's Message: CVN's Continuity

By Loys Maingon

Comox Valley Nature is about to enter its 50th year in 2016. I am pleased to begin this unanticipated 4th term as president on a high note. I took this position 3 years ago with a mandate to renew, grow and invigorate this society. As I start this new term, with the prospect of handing the reins over next year, that mandate is fulfilled. We must now work to secure CVN's long-term future.

CVN Demographics

I was a relatively young president 3 years ago, and even after some mild pummelling, I am reaching the median age for our society. Apart from this president, this year's CVN executive is under 50. The society is rejuvenating and will be vigorous. I understand that the number of members is well over 200, and every week new members submit a membership form. Our growth is constant.

Demographically, the face of CVN is changing with the revitalization of the Young Families Group/YNC headed by Jocie Ingram-Brooks and Jarrett Krentzel, and their integration within our monthly walk schedule. Their first outing was a total success that drew about 40 people young and old, who went out to do the most natural thing on earth that mankind has been doing since before we walked out of Africa – walk as a community

experiencing nature, discovering wonders together, sharing knowledge together, and listening together.

The question that lies at the heart of CVN's future is how to ensure continuity. CVN was created by a dynamic group of people who were in their early forties in 1966. This founding cohort was responsible for some of CVN's greatest – and too frequently overlooked – achievements, such as the survey of the Trent estuary, the "Save Seal Park", and the first "Save Vanier" campaigns, to name but a few. In the past 2 to 3 decades, CVN has relied on a steady influx of retirees to the valley to maintain numbers, with no demographic renewal. As a result, by 2010 the original age 40-65 cohort had virtually disappeared, and in many members' assessment, CVN was in serious difficulty and in need of renewal and revitalisation.

Ensuring Continuity

The continuity of any society like CVN lies in being able to appeal to, and communicate with, the entire demographic spread of the greater community. Nature is significant to every human being from the moment of conception onwards. The business of CVN is to communicate and enhance the human appreciation of nature, particularly nature in the Comox Valley. CVN must therefore provide programmes that are inclusive of every age group.

For 50 years we have been selling individual and family memberships. A "family membership" is not simply a membership for 2 adults. It is an inclusive family of adults and children – and our programmes must be open to all. While retirees meet in weekday groups inaccessible to young working people, the weekend walks are open to all our members, young and old. There must be opportunities for all to participate in CVN.

Like the Canadian Constitution, the new CVN must reflect Canadian values. CVN is inclusive: it does not

and cannot discriminate against a person by age, gender, religion, orientation, or any other reason.

Community Outreach Needs a Home

In order not to lose the gains made in our recent renewal, CVN needs to maintain continuity across generations.

The environmental problems we face in this century will require an increase in community participation. A large part of CVN's mandate is public outreach and education to promote community participation. To maintain continuity, we are handicapped by our lack of visibility outside the Web. In spite of its many activities, unlike SWI, CVCS, Project Watershed etc., CVN has no physical home or office with which we are identified within the valley.

A unique opportunity arose in June 2013, when Betty Brooks discovered that Baybrook was about to be demolished. As Father Brandt aptly pointed out, Mack Laing was one of the first notable naturalists in the Comox Valley who wrote on contemporary environmental issues. As many of you noted, saving this heritage and using it according to Mack Laing's will as a Nature House was a "no-brainer," that would provide CVN with a home to do what it does best: local natural history education.

Understanding our environmental history is an essential part of what real environmentalism is, if it is, as it



Three Swans

Photo: Charles Brandt

claims, a defense of natural civilised values. All great civilizations, be they Greek, Roman, Asian, or First Nations, rest on the principle of ancestor worship, summed up as the universal commandment to honour our forefathers and mothers. Not to do so is to lay the seeds of barbarity.

From its origins, from the very first Neolithic fire, mankind has been a great ecosystem engineer. We have always shaped our environment and are co-extensive with it. We may not have always done so wisely. The preservation of our environmental history is essential to understanding how and why we have shaped the world about us. We understand the planet largely by our interaction with it. We are all part of a continuum, and Mack Laing is part of the local historical fabric that made environmentalism possible in this valley. He is a significant figure in the history of Comox Valley naturalists, and we still have a lot to learn from him.

The recognition of heritage is the acknowledgment of the right to otherness and plurality, the cornerstone of civilised conduct. Only barbarians from Genghis Khan to the Nazis destroy heritage and glorify instant nihilism.

By a strange coincidence, on the same day that the world press released a video of ISIS wantonly demolishing Syrian heritage in Mosul,¹ the Town of Comox Council voted to demolish not one but two heritage houses – Baybrook and Shakesides – and erase all trace of Mack Laing's presence in the Valley, contrary to the will he entrusted to them. It is not clear to me why we should condone the Comox act and condemn the ISIS act. At different scales, both are expressions of cultural vandalism attempting to erase and rewrite history, because heritage is a statement that inconveniences a dominant political narrative. Anyone who claims that Baybrook should be removed to "return the site to nature", merely peddles a false vision of Eden free of Lilith and Adam and all the predecessors (including Lucifer) whose very presence made Eden possible, as a license for heritage vandalism.

Where Do We Go From Here?

A Nature House at Baybrook would have been an easy means to provide a useful institution to Comox Valley residents and secure the long-term continuity of CVN. While this is not to be in the near future at Baybrook, which will probably be renamed, good things can come out of adversity.

First, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." In the course of the last year we have come to know who are CVN's true friends, and who are merely opportunistic travelling

companions, or worse. The environmental environment is not always very friendly, and we must learn from that. Even the simplest organism learns and eschews the company of predators and parasites that threaten its long-term survival. My priority over the coming year will be to strengthen our long-term viability, and the executive will re-evaluate our relationships with other groups in the light of these events and the roles they played. Good friends, like Project Watershed, who supported our endeavours will find co-operation, and we are thankful for true friends who stood by us.

Second, “Adversity is just a prelude to better things.” Within 24 hours of the town of Comox decision, I received two offers of help to partner and move the Nature House project. While Baybrook may be lost, it is clear that the proposal drew a lot of enthusiasm across the Comox Valley. What was obstructed through small-mindedness has already sewn seed in more fertile ground. Efforts to secure a Nature House within the next 2 to 3 years are being renewed even as I write.

1. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2015/feb/26/syria-state-militants-destroy-ancient-iraqi-artefacts-mosul-video>

Young Naturalists Explorer Day

By Jocie Ingram



Young Naturalists at Seal Bay Photo: Loys Maingon

The Comox Valley Young Naturalists celebrated their first Explorer Day of 2015 by taking a walk down to the waterfront at Seal Bay Regional Park. It was a sunny February afternoon, and the children were full of enthusiasm. In the forest, we looked at the plentiful sword ferns lining the gully, touched soft mosses on the trunks of the bigleaf maple tree, and listened to kinglets and Pacific wrens.



Young Naturalists at Seal Bay Photo: Jarrett Krentzel

At the beach, the tide was low and the children were busy calling out their discoveries: “come and look at this!” Some of the highlights were purple and leather starfish, burrowing anemones, which made “little circles in the sand,” green shore crabs, hermit crabs (some children were very good at spotting these), chitons, and a gunnel that Loys Maingon later identified as a red gunnel *Pholis schultzi*.

With a mix of rocky and sandy beach, there were many creatures to look at. We also enjoyed good views of harbour seals and harlequin ducks. An hour passed quickly on the beach with happy and engaged children and adults, and there were no complaints going up the “big hill” on the way back.

New YNC co-leaders Jarrett Krentzel and Jocie Ingram enjoyed getting to know the returning YNC families, and welcomed new members. Everyone had a great afternoon!

The YNC meets on a Sunday afternoon once a month. Our next outing will be at Kye Bay on March 22. We look forward to exploring different places in Comox Valley together with our families.

American Kestrels Observed

Art Martell reports that members of the birding group observed American Kestrels on March 2 at Bridges and Headquarters Roads, and again at the airport near Kye Bay Road. Usually Kestrel numbers increase from migration during April and May, but this might be happening earlier this year because of the mild winter.

Mack Laing Homes To Be Demolished

Baybrook and Shakesides: Last Vestiges of a Comox Heritage

By Kate Panayotof

Thirty-three years ago, in January 1982, Mack Laing passed away at the age of 99. He generously donated to the Town of Comox the remaining portion of his land where his second home Shakesides stands. His last will asks in trust to the Town of Comox that his home be turned into a natural history museum with modest accommodation for a student/naturalist/caretaker. He also left a generous sum of money, about \$55,000.

At that time one could purchase an average home for \$40,000. Mack's home was in good repair, fully furnished and full of art, bird and other specimen collections, scientific articles, letters, and reprints. We also know that up until then many of his collections and articles had been sent to and still are in museums in the USA, Ottawa, and Victoria. Some items reside in the small Comox Museum.

The Town of Comox appears to have neglected for 33 years the dying will of an old and generous man, a notable Canadian, a Comox man of distinction, and a historical figure worthy of international, national and local recognition. He was a naturalist, artist, expeditionist, scientist-collector, teacher, environmentalist ahead of his time, a pioneer and orchardist in the Comox Valley. Mack Laing's life has been documented by the notable Canadian writer and historian Richard Mackie in his book *Hamilton Mack Laing: Hunter-Naturalist* (Sono Nis Press, 1985).

Laing's home has been rented for profit and neglected by the Town of Comox for these 33 years. The money from his donations, sales of possessions, and rent from his home, intended for a natural history museum, have been circulating in the Town of Comox coffers, neither strategically invested, nor quite to be accounted for.

Now the Mayor and Council of the Town of Comox have declared Mack Laing's Shakesides home "in bad repair" and slated it for demolition. There are no regrets or shame for the unfulfilled dying man's will and trust in his elected officials.

Further to this indignity we add the last nail to the coffin. Over two years the Mack Laing Heritage Society, a not-for-profit organization, has worked tirelessly. They worked with many pro bono professionals, historians, artists, naturalists, Mack's contemporaries, residents of

Comox and the Valley to prove to the Town of Comox Council that at least Mack Laing's first pioneer home, Baybrook, can be repaired and repurposed. This could fulfill his will and at no cost to the beneficiaries of Mack's generosity, the Comox Valley taxpayers. This home and the land it sits on are also in the possession of the Town of Comox. The Society's tireless, honourable effort was also brushed aside with a single stroke, a unanimous vote from the Comox Council on Feb. 25, 2015. Baybrook, Mack's first pioneer home in Comox, where he spent most of his productive life in which the citizens of Comox and the Valley can take pride, is also deemed not worthy and is to be demolished.

Are we afraid of "rowdy" museum goers, children's laughter while exploring and learning, visitors curious to find out more about our natural and civic history while visiting the Town of Comox and the Valley? What is it that our Town and Council stand for? Where is the sense for honouring our heritage and conserving for future generations?

I am a Canadian, proud of my heritage and that of others, ashamed for my Town and Council.



Baybrook stands on an ancient First Nation midden

Photo: Sharon Niscak

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Morrison Creek's Wild Headwaters

By Janet Gemmell

The Morrison Creek Headwaters is a wild area roughly the size of Stanley Park set between Lake Trail Road to the north and Maple Lake to the south. It extends west from the Inland Island Highway to a gravel escarpment that parallels Bevan/Pigeon Lake Road, and then turns to the east meeting the Inland Island Highway near Maple Lake.

This relatively flat, forested land, which has seen periods of logging over the years, holds the upper reaches of Morrison Creek and is also a source of water for the Millard-Piercy watershed. Morrison Creek's numerous tributaries and some 90 hectares of wetland are fed by dozens of prolific springs and many seeps that rise from the base of the escarpment. The forest is a mixture of alder, maple, cottonwood and conifers. The conifers are a mixture of ages and species, from those just springing up, to others perhaps 50 years old, along with the odd old veteran. Open, wetter areas are dominated by deciduous trees. Riparian areas have been graciously left with larger conifers. Open ponds, reedy swamps, skunk cabbage hollows, and soggy devils club slopes abound in the area.



In the Morrison Creek headwaters.

Photo: Jim Palmer

Morrison Creek's iconic species is the Morrison Creek Lamprey. It is a potentially parasitic form of the common, non-parasitic Western Brook Lamprey, *Lampetra richardsoni*. Lampreys are thought to spend 5 to 7 years as larval ammocoetes, filtering food from their burrows in quiet, silty creek beds. Most Western Brook Lampreys emerge from the creek bed, undergo

metamorphosis, quickly spawn in freshwater and die. Only in Morrison Creek does this species metamorphose into two distinct mature forms, one bronze and toothless, the other silver with teeth, *Lampetra richardsoni* var. *marifuga*. This form spawns a full year later. Its feeding habits are not entirely known and its breeding habits are a mystery. Such a life history is rare and offers a unique glimpse into evolution in progress. The constant flow of spring-fed water from the headwaters is surmised to contribute to this unusual evolution. The Morrison Creek Lamprey is listed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

The Morrison Creek Lamprey may be the diva of the creek but the foundations of its life are the plentiful runs of chum, pink, coho and the occasional chinook salmon, as well as cutthroat and rainbow trout. Fisheries records indicate that Morrison Creek is one of the most productive salmon watersheds of its size on eastern Vancouver Island. Though the main course of Morrison runs through both urban and rural areas, its channel and riparian zone are natural enough to provide good habitat for salmon. The relatively undisturbed area of the headwaters, with low gradients, many ponds and beaver dams, moderates high flows and flooding, helping to keep reds and eggs in place.

While many streams dry up in our increasingly hot summers, the springs and ponds provide a continual flow of cool water year round, a rare trait that helps rear coho fry. Coho juveniles stay in freshwater for 1 to 2 years before going to sea. Other creeks have been enhanced through hatchery programs; so far, Morrison Creek is self-sustaining and productive. As the tributaries and wetlands of the headwaters have not been dug, drained, ditched, piped or paved, and the neighbouring riparian areas are mostly intact, the headwaters of Morrison Creek continue to provide, in addition to lamprey and salmon, a rich habitat for diverse aquatic life.

Many other creatures have been seen or have left their mark in the headwaters: cougar, wolves, black bear, elk, deer, otter, mink and beaver, to name the furry ones. Song birds, raptors, and waterfowl abound. Of chorus frogs, both tree frogs and red-legged frogs are found here. Salamanders and toads are not often mentioned in reports, being elusive, but an investigation of the many ponds and their environs may reveal a variety of salamanders. Fortunately, no bullfrogs have been reported in the area.

The Elegant Rein Orchid *Piperia elegans*, more common south of here, grows in the Headwaters. The vegetation varies with the conditions, but the land having been

logged and mostly wet, is more brushy than clear underfoot. Areas off the roadway are sometimes challenging to traverse, and a wandering path ensues. Old beaver dams form critter highways but we find them useful as well.



In the Morrison Creek headwaters.

Photo: Jim Palmer

The Project Watershed website has maps and the SHIM report (Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping) has more information. The report recommended and followed up with a proposal for conservation of the Headwaters, an initiative the Morrison Creek Streamkeepers are rekindling.

The lands are privately owned, with two rural residences and two managed forest lots. The majority of the headwaters lie within the Village of Cumberland and are mostly owned by Hancock Timber Resource Group. Signs posted on Bevan Road across from the dump state that hiking and horseback riding are permitted. For more information on the creek visit morri.soncreek.org, and for information on routes and access, contact the Morrison Creek Streamkeepers at morri.soncreek@yahoo.ca. We'd love to take you for a walk.



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When Politics Override Environmental Priorities

By Loys Maingon

In British Columbia, 2015 begins much as 2014 ended. With relatively little precipitation over the past 3 months, the snowpack on Vancouver Island is down to 10% as of March 13, 2015. An initial water advisory restricting water usage in the Cowichan that would normally be issued in July has just been issued March 13. Last year in August the province declared a state of emergency with regards to the low levels of the Cowichan River and its impact on the local tourism, fishing, and pulp and paper sectors. Once again the needs of the main employer, the New Catalyst mill, have been prioritized to sustain the local economy, over any long-term environmental considerations.

Underlying this crisis is a silent refusal to acknowledge that while pundits continue to tell us that “it’s the economy, stupid,” the reality is that the market economy relies largely on the state of the environment: “it’s only the environment that makes the economy possible.” That is true, even if we wish to think of the environment only as “the natural capital,” which is the central – if silent – assumption of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*.

To some, the anomalous situation we are witnessing might be written off as just an accident in simple weather patterns. This is in fact the product of a pervasive state of denial, deeply rooted in a quite anti-environmental prejudice. While some may have forgotten, in its cutbacks of BC Parks, the Campbell government specifically targeted “nature education” programs in BC parks, because these were seen as a “breeding ground for environmentalists.” Almost half the jobs (145/320) targeted were Park’s environmental scientists and biologists.¹

As everything related to climate change, which too many people still continue to deny against the vast majority of the scientific community, the current situation is a product of our making, for which nobody is willing to assume responsibility. We may want to package this intellectually and call it “the Anthropocene” – an age of extinctions governed by the impacts of man – as though it were a natural progression. In fact, man’s impact on the planet started from the moment of conception and has grown exponentially ever since our first attempts at agriculture. What is not natural is the denial of a bond between man and nature. That bond and an obligation to maintain a conscious continuity between this generation and both the past and future has always been recognized

by agricultural societies as the keystone to responsible stewardship, a concept well-honed by the American poet and essayist, Wendell Berry.²

Climate change, as Naomi Klein summarily puts it: “Changes Everything.”³ In spite of repeated warnings from the scientific community dating back to the first release of *Limits to Growth* in 1972, which already projected the impact of climate change, we have continued to prioritize business interests over environmental interests. It should therefore come as no surprise that the economic data and related impacts from 1972 to 2015 perfectly track the projections of the *Limits to Growth* “Business-as-usual” scenario (see the figure below.)⁴

developing problems that are now very much at our doorstep. In spite of much talk of “sustainability,” eco-friendliness, and many conferences of parties, politics have continued business as usual, essentially unchanged and with the same indifference to the environment.

To fail to heed objective scientific information is one thing. What is now happening increasingly is that politicians are confusing commercial advertising and the interests inherent in it with the public interest. In so doing there is an increasing trend to “control the message,” as a means of avoiding having to deal with an unfolding reality.

It is disconcerting to observe a growing inverse

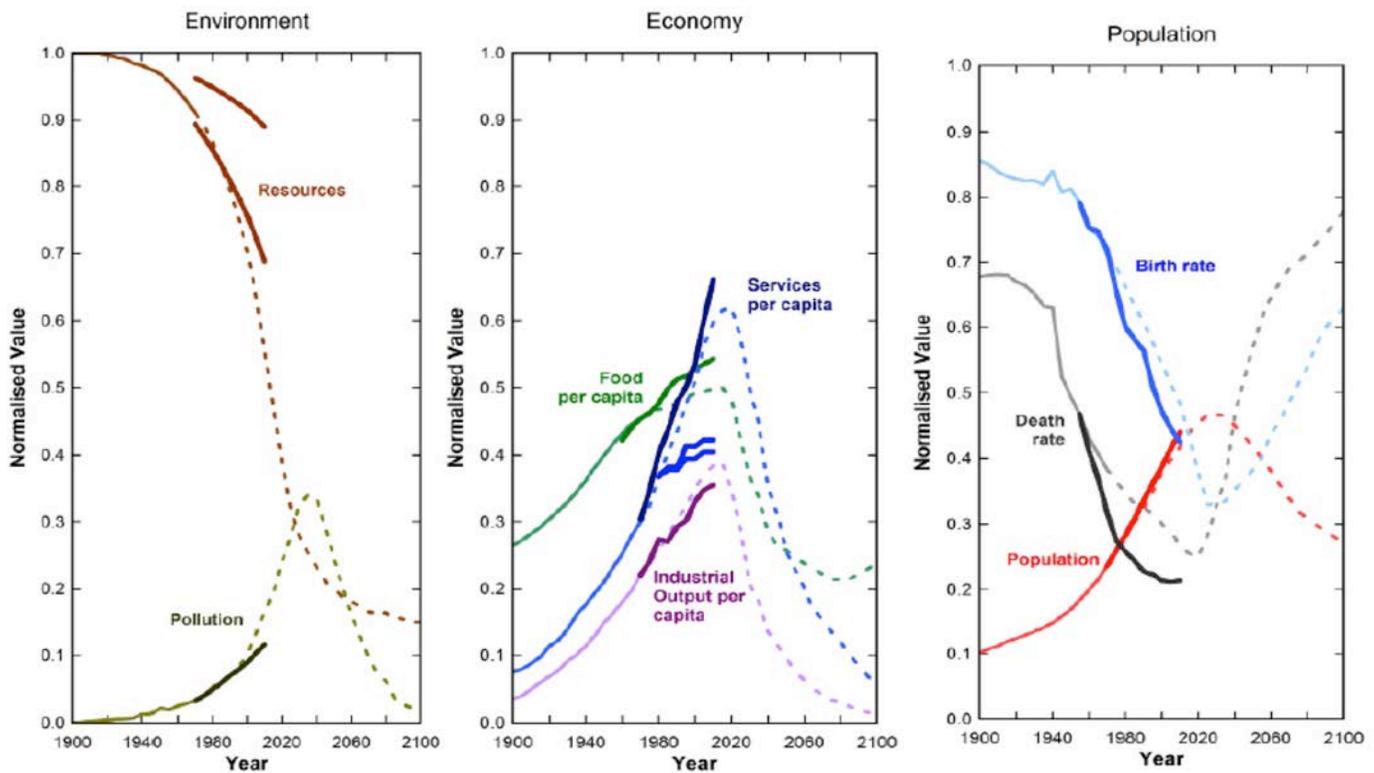


Figure 1. *LTG BAU* (Standard Run) scenario (dotted lines) compared with historical data from 1970 to 2010 (solid lines)—for demographic variables: population, crude birth rate, crude death rate; for economic output variables: industrial output per capita, food per capita, services per capita (upper curve: electricity p.c.; lower curves: literacy rates for adults, and youths [lowest data curve]); for environmental variables: global persistent pollution, fraction of non-renewable resources remaining (upper curve uses an upper limit of 150,000 EJ for ultimate energy resources; lower curve uses a lower limit of 60,000 EJ [Turner 2008]).

In other words, in spite of much posturing and window dressing, for the past 40 years politicians have failed to take heed of objective information provided by the scientific community, and have failed to translate this information into an actual consensus to address real and

relationship between support for science and the developing environmental crisis. As the environmental crisis develops, instead of supporting environmental science, governments around the world are suppressing scientific freedom of inquiry and expression, in order to

control the messaging in favour of continuing the status quo, even as it becomes increasingly obvious that the status quo is unsustainable.⁵ Though examples of this are known at home to Canadians, this phenomenon is increasingly widespread across the world. To varying degrees of social latitude, from east to west, from the Middle East to China and from Russia to South Africa, professional scientists are only marginally free to speak. State or industrial controls always constrain what can be said for the public good. Only the means of free enquiry and the free expression thereof vary.

The anti-environmental bias has been well documented in North America by Robert R. Kuehn (2004).⁶ As Kuehn amply documents, these attacks are rarely on the substance of the science and almost always on the purported character of scientists. It has now reached the level of a “party line,” witnessed in the governor of Florida’s directive to environmental and climate scientists not to use the term “climate change.”⁷ Environmental scientists can be fired for correctly naming the unfolding phenomena that they observe and measure.⁸

In keeping with this brave new reality, the same politicians who would effectively deny the growingly self-evident reality of climate change have also adopted a strategic response. When asked by school children about climate change, Republican candidates answer that they are not scientists and therefore cannot discuss this. By this logic, only an accountant can discuss the state budget, and only a soldier can discuss a declaration of war. This is a kind of strategic “neutrality,” which merely confirms the legal axiom: “Silence is approbation.” So-called “neutrality” is really a hypocritical way of not dealing with real problems and is an abdication of social responsibilities. Having repressed public access to scientific information, these same politicians then also deny that that very information was accessible to them, and claim that the same information is available to the public.

It is important to understand where this trend is currently headed in Canada. The muzzling of Canadian scientists has already become an international scandal, and has been well documented.

To a large extent, the deliberate ignorance and feigned neutrality that has increasingly cast a veil over public information and public discourse has been the growing means by which business as usual has dominated the past 40 years. However, until this decade, however marginalized environmental scientists have been, there has always been the possibility for them to pursue independent research. This week, the Canadian Institutes

of Health Research (CIHR/ISRC), have released a new funding policy: all health research project applications must have matching funds from private partners. There are very few really independent private partners able to fund research outside of industry.

This policy effectively makes it mandatory for Canadian researchers to have their research approved by industry. Canadian scientists have pointed out that this effectively muzzles scientific research, particularly in environmental health, because it means that very few projects that might be critical of, or are of no benefit to, industry will be funded.⁹ From the point of view of environmental health and environmental biology, it does not take much imagination to understand what that means in terms of pollution research associated with climate-change-related impacts. Schindler’s landmark 1970s work on phosphates at the Experimental Lakes, or more recent work on the health impacts of the tar sands development on First Nations health, would never have received funding under these standards.

That is why last June’s Tsilhqot’in judgement is becoming increasingly important for all Canadians. While there has always been a pretense that environmental decisions required a social license, Tsilhqot’in Nation vs. British Columbia, has re-asserted the obligations of government to the well-being of First Nations, and has elevated the standard for meaningful consultation with the people affected. This precedent has a special significance for all Canadians. Governments have to prioritize the interests of ordinary people over those of corporations. In this respect, Tsilhqot’in stands as a predecessor to an environmental bill of rights which some municipalities throughout British Columbia are beginning to enact.¹⁰

This spring, the implications of Tsilhqot’in Nation vs. British Columbia are becoming more obvious in two important events, the spring herring spawn and the Site C decision.

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In British Columbia, political interference in scientific recommendations is a regular annual event. Every year the herring spawn has become a political decision. Ever since the collapse of the herring fishery in the 1960s that ended interception fisheries, and the subsequent rebuilding of the stock with a total closure from 1968 to 1971, the conservation of the stock and its ecological importance have remained a source of concern. Although the herring fishery has been replaced with terminal fisheries, or roe fisheries, the returns have continued not to meet pre-collapse expectations. With the increased importance of First Nations consultation, First Nations have increasingly asserted their management rights over all resources, particularly with regards to traditional fisheries.

As DFO memos show, in 2014 the federal Fisheries minister, Gail Shea, overrode the advice of DFO scientists that “the three [herring fishing] areas showing signs of recovery, it is recommended that they remain closed in 2014.” Contrary to First Nations tests which determined that they had “seldom seen lower levels of herring roe in their nets,” the fishery was opened at the request of industry.¹¹ Political interference and disregard for scientific information have resulted in social unrest in fishing ports and in a series of largely inconclusive First Nations lawsuits leading ultimately to the closure of the commercial herring roe fishery for this year. It is not just a question of a costly legal process that could have been easily avoided by following objective scientific advice. The litigation process is really a preliminary testing ground for the precedents set in *Tsilhqot’in vs. British Columbia*. Although the balance of rulings followed by tactful retraction by the federal ministry has allowed the ministry to save face, the argument still largely revolves around the priority of science and the public interest of the individuals most directly affected, and the interest of an economic status quo.

Similarly, although the provincial government has approved with great fanfare the development of Site C, that development is currently mired in at least 3 lawsuits in BC and in Alberta (Blueberry River Nation, Mikisew Cree, and Athabasca Chipewyan). In all three cases, as in *Tsilhqot’in vs. British Columbia*, the initial suit rests on “failure to consult.” Additionally, this is reinforced by the categorical disavowal of the approval by the head of the review panel, Harry Swain, because the government exempted the project from the mandatory regulatory review by the BC Utilities commission. In fact, the review panel had recommended against this project, because BC Hydro had not made a valid economic case. In other words, Site C was approved by the government,

against clearly articulated environmental concerns, and against clear economic concerns that an economic case has yet to be made. Once again the project was approved for political reasons to maintain an economic status quo that is neither sustainable globally nor desirable by the people most directly affected locally.

1. http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/02/01/joyce_murray_a_complicated_liberal_wal_kom.html and <http://wcel.org/sites/default/files/publications/PIase%20HOLD%20-%20A%20Report%20on%20Diminished%20Monitory%20and%20Enforcement%20Capacity%20in%20the%20Mistry%20of%20Water,%20Land%20and%20Air%20Protection.pdf>
2. Wendell Berry (1977). *The Unsettling of America*. Sierra Club.
3. Naomi Klein (2014). *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
4. G. Turner (2014) “Is Global Collapse Imminent.” MSSI Research Paper No. 4. Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, Melbourne University.
5. <http://www.academymatters.ca/2013/05/harpers-attack-on-science-no-science-no-evidence-no-truth-no-democracy/> and http://sciencewriters.ca/initiatives/muzzling_canadian_federal_scientists/
6. Robert R. Kuehn, "Suppression of Environmental Science". *American Journal of Law and Medicine*, 30 (2004): 333–69. Boston University School of Law.
7. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/14/opinion/on-gail-colleins-globe-warm-who-me.html?ref=opinion&r=0>
8. <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/03/10/us/ap-us-florida-governor-climate-change.html> and <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/29540-talking-about-climate-change-banned-in-florida>
9. <http://civics.gc.ca/e/193.html> and <http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/science-et-technologie/434373/recherches-en-sante-fiances-auprive-ou-pri-ves-de-fancement>
10. <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/bl ogs/science-matters/2014/11/the-movement-for-environmental-rights-is-builing/>
11. <http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/feds-reopen-herring-fishery-over-scientist-and-first-nations-objections> (February 28, 2015)

BC Nature Conference and AGM Upcoming

BC Nature reports that space is still available at its 2015 Conference and Annual General Meeting, hosted this year by the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club on May 7 to 10. For details, registration forms, and availability of programs, see

<http://www.saltspringtnc.ca/BCNature.php>.

Help Youth to Become Citizen Scientists

The BC Nature Education Committee encourages members to participate in local Science Fairs as judges and to connect with local teachers to assist as naturalist mentors for Science Fair projects. This is a rewarding opportunity to help youth to “know nature and keep it worth knowing” by encouraging youth to be outdoors and become engaged citizen scientists.

Perhaps this suggestion could be discussed and promoted in our various groups.

Species-at-Risk Recovery Planning

BC Nature encourages members to attend public open houses on Species-at-Risk Recovery Planning.

Environment Canada has released a three-year plan to develop recovery documents for federally listed species at risk. They invite you to learn about recovery planning activities under the Species at Risk Act for a number of species at risk in your community. They are seeking feedback related to areas highlighted in the recovery plans that are in development such as: where the species are found, the types of habitat they need, the threats to their habitat, and ways we can help the species to survive or recover. (For more information, please contact [Daniel I.e. Prevoost@ec. gc. ca.](mailto:Daniel.Prevoost@ec.gc.ca))

Vancouver Island Open House: Wednesday, March 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Oliver Wood Community Centre (Monarch Room 1), Nanaimo.

CVNS Annual General Meeting for 2015

Highlights of the February 15 AGM:

- Fred Newhouse gave an update on the status of The Land Conservancy of BC. They are about to file a Plan of Arrangement with the Supreme Court of B.C. that will ensure their continued operation and the continued protection of TLC properties.
- Andrew Jones gave a fascinating talk, “Experiencing the Marine Life of North Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii”, illustrated with fabulous photos taken (mostly) from his kayak.
- The executives for 2015 were elected (see “About the Society” on the last page of this newsletter.

FAMILY DINING THAT'S WELL WORTH THE DRIVE!



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Upcoming CVNS Activities

Leaders are still needed for some walks. Please volunteer.

General Instructions for Field Trip Participants:

- Car-pool at the Old Church Theatre, 755 Harmston Avenue in Courtenay, or meet guides at trail heads, unless otherwise announced.
- Arrive at the parking area on Harmston Avenue 10 minutes prior to the appointed time.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- Bring water and a snack.
- No dogs please.
- Share travelling expenses when car-pooling.

Schedule

Send your suggestions for trips to coordlnator@comoxvalleynaturalists.bc.ca.

Sunday, March 29. (Club walk) Woodlot walk. Meet at Harmston at 9:30am. Leader: Fred Newhouse.

Saturday, April 4. (Club walk) Fawn Lily Walk – Exhibition Grounds, Courtenay. Meet at 10:00am at the Exhibition Grounds parking lot beside the Comox Valley Curling Club on Headquarters Road across from Vanier High School.

Sunday, April 12. (Club walk) Cumberland Forest Trails hike. Meet at Harmston at 9:30am or at Jumbo's Cabin on the Comox Lake Road beyond Cumberland at 10:00am. A 2-hour hike, some steep-ish slopes. Leader: Andrew Nicoll.

Saturday, April 18. (Public walk) Paradise Meadows Loop Walk. Meet at the parking lot at 9:30am at the bottom of Strathcona Parkway, just off the Inland Highway. (Alternate trip in case of bad weather: Bear Creek Park. Meet at 10:00am at park entrance – 19A north, left onto Hamm Road, immediate right onto Macauley Road, about 2 km to park on right).

Saturday, April 25. (Earth Day April 20). (Club walk) Puntledge River from Comox Lake. Meet at Harmston at 9:30 am or at the Upper Dam at 10:00am (follow Comox Lake Road and turn right at the Rod and Gun Club). Leader: Loys Maingon.

Saturday May 2. (Club event) Spring Bird Count.

Saturday May 2. (Club walk). Stotan Falls. Meet at Harmston at 9:30 am or 10:00 at Stotan Falls.

Saturday May 9. (Club walk) Field trip to Cowichan Garry Oaks Reserve (Nature Conservancy of Canada).

Bloom Festival. Leave Harmston at 8:00 am. (Car-pooling will be organized in advance).

Saturday, May 16. (Public walk) Helen McKenzie Lake (Mount Washington). This is a longer walk – approx. 9 km. Meet at parking lot on Strathcona Parkway (just off the Inland highway) at 9:30am.

Saturday, May 23. (Club walk) Comox Bluffs Ecological Reserve. Meet at Harmston at 9:30am. Leader: Loys Maingon. Wear sturdy boots or shoes; good trail, but some climbing.

Saturday, May 30. (Club hike) Field hike to North Beaufort Camus Meadows (Cumberland). Leader : Tim Ennis. (Meeting details TBA).

Saturday, June 6. (Club hike) Ripple Rock (Campbell River). Meet at Courtenay Country Market on highway 19A at 9:00am. Leader: TBA.

Saturday, June 13. (Club walk) Lower Trent River. Meet at Harmston at 9:30am. Leader: Loys Maingon.

Saturday, June 20. (Public walk) Elk Falls (Campbell River dam). Meet at Courtenay Country Market at 9:00am.

Sunday, June 28: (Club event) Annual CVN Summer Picnic – Location TBA. Bring chairs, plates, and cutlery. Bring also items for auction. (Volunteers needed for set-up and take-down.)

Saturday July 4. (Club event) Butterfly count. (SWI Collaboration). Cumberland Marsh area and Mount Washington. Details later.

Reminder for Field Trip Leaders

All field trip participants who are non-members must sign the waiver recognizing that there are risks inherent in all outdoor activities.



Sandpiper

Photo: Charles Brandt

About the Society

Website

comoxvalleynaturalists.bc.ca

General E-mail Address

coordinator@comoxvalleynaturalists.bc.ca

Mailing Address

Comox Valley Naturalists Society
Box 3222
Courtenay BC
V9N 5N4

Executive

President: Loys Maingon (250-331-0143,
aardscand@gmail.com)

Vice-President: Jarrett Krentzel

Secretary: Gabriel Bau

Treasurer: Isabella Erni (TreasurerCVNS@gmail.com)

Group Leaders and Other Appointees

Birding: Dave Robinson

Botany: Karin Franzen, Alison Maingon

Families Group (YNC): Jocie Ingram, Jarrett Krentzel

Conservation: Loys Maingon

Photography: Terry Thormin

Wetland Restoration: Frank Hovenden

BC Nature Delegate: Sharon Niscak

Comox Valley Environmental Council liaison: Jarrett Krentzel

Comox Valley Conservation Strategy liaison: Murray Little

Trip Planning: Joyce Bainbridge

Membership: Sue Martell

Web Administrator: Krista Kaptein, Isabella Erni

Newsletter Advertising: Kathie Woodley

Newsletter Editor: Sharon Niscak, David Orford

Speakers: Loys Maingon

Membership

Single \$30, Family \$40, Life \$300
Junior (12-18) \$10, Student (18-22) \$15

Mail cheques (payable to Comox Valley Nature) to:
Sue Martell
251-3399 Crown Isle Drive,
Courtenay BC
V9N 9X7

Receipts are provided at meetings, or send a SASE.

Membership fee is due January 1. If not paid by February 28, names are struck off the CVNS and BC Nature lists. New memberships started after September are extended to the following full calendar year.

Change of address, phone number or e-mail: Please advise Sue Martell, 250-334-2979.

Meetings

Regular monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Florence Filberg Centre, 411 Anderton Avenue, Courtenay.

June meeting: Potluck at member's houses

No meetings in July, August and December.

Bird meetings: First Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Filberg Soroptimist Lounge, Courtenay. For information, contact Dave Robinson.

Botany meetings: Second Monday of the month at a member's home, 12:00 p.m. An e-mail is sent prior to the meeting to confirm location and topic.

Botany walks (weather permitting) follow the meeting and are also scheduled at other times. To be included on the botany list, phone or send e-mail to Karin Franzen or Alison Maingon.

Newsletter

The newsletter is published 3 times per year (March, June, and November). It is e-mailed to members, and is also available at the monthly meetings. If you wish to receive printed copies by Canada Post, the fee is \$5.00 per year.

The newsletter depends on your submissions. Please consider contributing an article on any topic of general interest to other members—for example: natural history, trips, or unusual sightings. You can send your contribution by e-mail to newsletter@comoxvalleynaturalists.bc.ca.

We would appreciate receiving contributions by the first day of the publication month.