Conference Program





Hosted by

ure Comox Valley Nature





Comox Valley Nature BCN Conference Organization Committee Members

(Rear row, from left) Jim Boulter, Murray Little, Judy Shorter, Bruce Martin, Loys Maingon,
Fred Newhouse, Annette Boulter and Barbara Martin

(Front Row, from left) Jarrett Krenzel, Gabriel Bau, Sharon Niscak and Jose Narbona

(Not Present) Isabella Erni

CVN Conference Organizing Committee

Committee Chair: Loys Maingon
Secretary: Gabriel Bau
Registrar: Jose Narbona
Social & Catering Organizers:
Judy Shorter & Barbara Martin
Fundraising: Annette & Jim Boulter
Field Trips: Bruce Martin

First Nations Liaison: Fred Newhouse

Facility Coordinator: Bruce Martin
Speaker Coordinator: Loys Maingon
Display Coordinator: Jarrett Krentzel
Web & Program: Jim Boulter
Treasurer: Isabella Erni
Volunteer Coordinator: Sharon Niscak

Media: Loys Maingon

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Welcome from Loys Maingon

As I sit down to write this welcome, I am told by Comox Valley Nature's 50th Birthday Celebration and BC Nature AGM organizing committee, that we are about to welcome over 224 guest fellownaturalists. Population numbers and what they imply

always fascinate this biologist: 4 years ago our numbers were about 135. They are now about 240. So, between May 12 and 15 this conference will double the number of naturalists in the valley.

A mere 14 months ago, when John Neville came to ask us to host the BC Nature AGM, we were contemplating a much scaled-down

quiet celebration of our 50th anniversary as one of the 6 founding naturalist clubs of the BC Federation of Naturalists, now known as "BC Nature." The preparation for this conference has been an incredible journey, made possible entirely by the dedication of the volunteer organizing committee, which first met in May, and to which all credit goes in the preparation of what we hope will be a very pleasant and memorable experience for all. So, we are delighted to welcome you as members of our greater family from across the province.

The Comox Valley is an extremely diverse region. It is the northernmost distribution of BC's endangered Garry Oak Ecosystem. While that makes it home to a northernmost pocket of Mediterranean climate, it is also home to the rich alpine ecosystems of BC's first and largest provincial park, Strathcona Park. The region therefore offers visitors a rich diversity of flora and fauna and landscapes, from ocean to alpine ecosystems, which we hope to showcase to you in a broad range of afternoon outings and trips.

While our regional interest has to be on our celebration of our 50th anniversary and on the 100-year history of conservation in Canada and the Comox Valley, which has included conservation giants such as, Alan Brooks, Hamilton Mack Laing, and Ian McTaggart Cowan, no naturalist today can remain indifferent to the developing reality of climate change. After 50 years, our focus is set on the future and on our investment in the environment we hand to future generations. Therefore, while the

outings offer an insight into the rich biodiversity of the Comox Valley and on the programs we offer for young families, the focus of many of the speakers at this conference is on the implications of climate change for Vancouver Island and the state of our

local environment.

Four keynote speakers will provide us with insights into the future of conservation in BC in a changing environment. Richard Hebda will outline what the Comox Valley might expect in years ahead and Briony Penn will give us a retrospect of naturalist history through the many contributions of Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan. Steven Price, of Birds

Studies Canada, will review how far international conservation has come since the signing of Canada's first international conservation treaty, The Migratory Birds Convention in 1916, and Val Schaefer will give us a sense of the restoration tools available to meet the challenges we will face in the next 100 years. The contributions of the various speakers on Friday should give all participants a good sense of the diversity of interests and state of environmental knowledge in the Comox Valley.

It is not going to be all work, though – and we expect our guests to relax and enjoy our home and our company. The Comox Valley is Vancouver Island's richest agricultural region, and though it may be the "North Island", it is home to some international prize-winning farms, cheese factories, wineries and micro-breweries. We have enlisted the services of Chef Laura Agnew from "As you Like It", as well as 40-Knots Winery and Gladstone brewery to enhance your culinary and oenological experience of the valley at breakfast and supper – all tailored to various dietary requirements. The conference is centrally located in the heart of historical downtown Courtenay – with the Art Gallery, Paleontological Museum, restaurants, and cafes at hand.

When you arrive, our volunteers will be delighted to provide you with your registration package and answer your questions. On behalf of the organizing committee, I again extend a very hearty welcome as I would to members of our large family of naturalists, and hope that your stay in Courtenay will be an enriching and pleasant experience.

Thursday, May 12th

Morning Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Max	Difficulty	Leader	
8 am -Noon	Registration in Lobby of Filberg Centre					
8:30 am - 12:15 pm	Child Nature Education	Car Pool from Filberg	16	Easy, wheel chair Access	Jarrett Krentzel	
9 am - Noon	Birding by Ear Workshop	Filberg Rotary Hall and Walking Field Trip	30	Mostly wheel chair Access	John Neville	
10 am - 6 pm	Conference Marketplace	Filberg Soroptimist Room	Retail and Auction Tables			
10 am - 6 pm	Display Tables	Throughout Filberg Centre		Information Tab	les	

Birding by Ear Workshop, with Special Emphasis to Songs and Calls with John Neville

Being able to recognize birds by their songs and calls is an added pleasure in the great outdoors. Birds over the fence, hidden in a tree, hidden in the marsh or calling at night add greatly to our pleasure. Especially, if we can put a name to them.

John will give you examples of typical songs and calls in a classroom setting, and then take you for an easy walk to listen and look for local birds. The workshop lasts from 9-12 and you are welcome to bring books and binoculars.

Thursday, May 12th

Afternoon Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Max	Difficulty	Leader	
Noon - 1:30 pm		Lunch on your ov	vn			
1:30 - 3:00 pm	Nature Photography for Beginners	Filberg Craft Room	19	Easy, wheel chair access	Terry Thormin	
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Comox Valley Rare & Endangered Species	Car pool from Filberg Conference Centre	16	Easy, no wheel chair access	Marta D. & Helen R.	
1:30 - 5 pm	Watershed Restoration	Filberg East end Conference Hall & Car Pool	20	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Loys Maingon	
2 - 4 pm	Executive Meeting	Filberg Rotary	Hall, Incl	udes tea/coffee		
3 - 6:30 pm	Registration in Lobby of Filberg Centre					
4 - 6 pm	Directors Meeting Filberg Rotary Hall, light dinner for Directors					
4 - 6 pm	Dinner on your own					

Thursday, May 12th

Evening Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Speaker
6 pm to 8 pm	Wine and Cheese Social, Cash Bar		
6:30 pm	Pre-Conference Welcome		Loys Maingon & Mayor Baird
7 pm	Photography Show		Terry Thormin
7:15 pm	Poet Laureate	Filberg Conference Hall	Kevin Flesher
7:45 pm	"Toad People"		Gwen Barlee
8:00 pm	Climate Change in the Comox Valley		Dr. Richard Hebda
9:00	Important Bird Areas	Krista Kapte	
10 pm	Hall Closes	Filberg Centre	

Photography Show With Terry Thormin http://www.pbase.com/terrythormin

Terry Thormin is a keen naturalist who managed to translate his passion into a day job, first working for a private ecological consulting company doing bird work, then working for the Royal Alberta Museum for 23 years in the invertebrate zoology program. Now retired, his is able to pursue his passion for nature and nature photography full time. Since moving to Vancouver Island in 2009 he has built up an impressive portfolio of photographs of everything from mushrooms and insects to orcas and grizzly bears. His photographs have appeared in numerous books and magazines and are being used in signage for nature parks across North America.

Kevin Flesher: Comox Valley Poet Laureate, 2015-2017

"My mission is to create more opportunities for more people to experience more poetry," he said. "Old and young, folks all sorts, in all the nooks and crannies of our valley. I will stir the pot and stoke the fire, bang the tune and strum the lyre."

Toad People with Producer Gwen Barlee

Toad People is an inspiring new documentary film project produced by the Wilderness Committee about people in communities across British Columbia who are taking action to save the wildlife in their backyards.

It's not just about people standing up for toads. It is about people across the province who are stepping up to protect mountain caribou, badgers, songbirds and many other species at risk. Despite having this amazing diversity of wildlife – including 1,900 species at risk – BC is one of only two provinces in Canada with no endangered species law. After *Toad People* is completed in the fall of 2016, we will be taking it on tour to educate people and mobilize them to help protect endangered species across British Columbia – which includes urging decision-makers to enact species at risk legislation in the province.

<u>Climate Change and Ecological Impacts in the Comox Valley:</u> <u>Preparing for a different future with Dr. Richard Hebda</u>

Dr. Hebda is the Curator of Botany and Earth History at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, and a Nationally recognized researcher of climate change and the author of hundreds of articles. He will relate the history, present condition and possible future of Vancouver Island landscapes and ecosystems. Considering of the major changes coming soon, he will propose a way ahead as we and nature faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

IBA Program With Krista Kaptein http://www.ibacanada.ca/

The Important Bird Areas program is one of the major province-wide stewardship projects of BC Nature. Initiated by BirdLife International in the 1980s, the IBA Program is a network of thousands of sites across the world, which has been identified as critically important for the conservation of birds. In Canada, Nature Canada and Bird Studies Canada coordinate the IBA Program nationally. Within BC, BC Nature is taking a lead role in conserving BC's 82 designated IBAs, together with our national partners.

In 2006, as part of the IBA Program, BC Nature initiated a Caretaker Network to match volunteers with each Important Bird Area in British Columbia. Our 40-50 Caretakers enrolled to date act as the eyes, ears and hands on the ground and are the driving force of the program. Annually, Caretakers donate an estimated 13,000 hours to monitor the status of the birds, their habitat and conservation threats, and to work within their local communities to raise public awareness and protect habitat within their IBAs. The BC volunteer Caretaker program is now well established and shares many similarities with other grassroots IBA programs that exist across Canada and in more than 200 countries worldwide.

Friday, May 13th

Morning Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Leader	
6 - 8 am	Morning Birding Outing	Car pool from Filberg Centre	Gordon Stewart	
8 - 10 am	Registration in Lobby of Filberg Centre			
8 am - 6 pm	Conference Marketplace	Filberg Soroptimist Room	Retail and Auction Tables	
8 am - 6 pm	Display Tables	Throughout Filberg Centre	Information Tables	
8 - 9 am	Artisan Breakfast	Filberg Conference Hall		
9 am	Welcome	Filberg Conference Hall	Andy Everson & Norma Morton Loys Maingon M/C	

Andy Everson http://www.andyeverson.com/

Internationally known as an artist, Andy, a member of the K'omoks First Nation, also promotes his traditional heritage through song and dance. He has a Master's degree in Anthropology, and established the Copper Canoe Company for the creation of Aboriginal language media. Andy has graciously consented to welcome our Conference attendees to the Comox Valley.

Norma Morton

In 1966, Norma Morton, along with a small group of like-minded people, founded the Comox-Strathcona Natural History Society, now known as Comox Valley Nature. She is a life-time member of CVN, and still retains a deep interest in Conservation.

Morning Presentations

Time	Conference Hall A: Loys Maingon M/C	Conference Hall B: Jim Boulter M/C	
9:30 to	Growing, Growing, Gone? Not with a	Tree Diseases in Gardens and Parks	
10:15	Steady State Economy with Neil Dawe	with Dr. Duncan Morrison	
10:10 to 10:30		Coffee Break	
10:25 to	Tsolum River Restoration	West Coast Mimulus Genetics	
11:10	with Jack Minard	with Dr. Jannice Friedman	
11:20 to	Community Estuary Restoration with	Wetland Conservation	
12:05	Jennifer Sutherst, Project Watershed	with Dan Buffett	

Growing, Growing Gone? Not with a steady State Economy with Neil Dawe

Neil is a Registered Professional Biologist and a recipient of the *Ian McTaggart-Cowan Award of Excellence in Biology* from the Association of Professional Biologists of BC. He retired after 31 years with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. Currently, he's President of the Qualicum Institute and Production Editor for the BC Field Ornithologists' journal, *British Columbia Birds*.

Tree Diseases in Gardens and Parks with Duncan Morrison

Diseases are normal components of ecosystems and will be illustrated with examples of diseases of foliage, stems, and roots from local broadleaf and conifer species. In his presentation, Duncan will define biotic and abiotic diseases, and the parasite/ saprophyte relationships. Topics include the effects of disease on survival of trees, monitoring of disease incidence, and tree disease in a changing climate.

Tsolum River Restoration with Jack Minard

Jack spent 15 years of his life working with the Tsolum River Restoration Society to get the players required on the same page and moving in the same direction to deal with an abandoned mine that came very close to completely destroying the Tsolum River. Jack will show how historical logging practices decimated fish populations not only in the Tsolum but also across BC and how communities responded to this loss of salmon stocks over the years.

The dramatic story of why the Tsolum was not recovering through this period of great community involvement and the incredible efforts a unique partnership took to restore the river's water quality from the effects of the abandoned mine. This is a good news story and a statement of what can be done when diverse interests and agendas converge.

West Coast Mimulus Genetics with Dr. Jannice Friedman

Monkey flowers (*Mimulus*, Phrymaceae) have a long and venerable history of providing key insight into fundamental evolutionary processes. Research on *Mimulus* began with Darwin, and the genus has since been used to study local adaptation, pollinator divergence, speciation, the genetic effects of selfing, and adaptation to extreme edaphic environments, including copper mines and serpentine soils.

British Columbia is home to at least 14 species of *Mimulus*, including both common and rare species. We are studying how the annual and perennial ecotypes of the yellow monkey flower *Mimulus guttatus* have adapted to life on Vancouver Island. We are also interested in the changes that have occurred since *M. guttatus* has become an invasive species in parts of Europe and New Zealand.

Community Estuary Restoration with Jennifer Sutherst

Since 2008 the Comox Valley Project Watershed Society has been focused on the restoration and protection of the K'ómoks Estuary. Learn about their ground-breaking blue carbon research, eelgrass and salt marsh restoration projects and how they have directly involved the community and local government in their work in order to achieve success. https://projectwatershed.ca/

Wetland Conservation and Resilience with Dan Buffett

The presentation will highlight some of the protected and restored wetlands on Vancouver Island and introduce the topic of 'resilience', which provides a different lens to look at how we conserve wetlands that we know provide a range of ecosystem goods and services for communities, including clean water, wildlife habitat, and flood control.

Friday, May 13th

Afternoon Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Max	Difficulty	Leader
12:05 - 1:30 pm		Lunch on your o	own		
11:30 - 5:15 pm	Mitlenatch Bird Sanctuary	Car Pool, from Filberg Bring a bag lunch and water Time Sensitive. Note early departure time	10	Easy, no wheel chair access	Betty Brooks & Briony Penn
1:00 - 5:00 pm	Estuary Archaeology & Restoration	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	25	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Dan Bowen
1:15 pm - 4 pm	Point Holmes Foreshore	Car Pool from Filberg Centre Lecture is wheel Chair Accessible, walk is not	16	Easy, some wheel chair access	John Tayless
1:15 pm - 4:30 pm	Morrison Creek Headwaters	Car Pool from Filberg Centre; Limited to 4 cars due to parking	16	Moderate, No wheel chair access	Jim Palmer and Jan Gemmell
1:30 - 5:30 pm	Harold Macy Woodlot	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	16	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Fred Newhouse
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Vancouver Island University Research Station	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	25	Easy, wheel chair access	Staff
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Kin Beach Native Plant Botany	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	16	Easy, no wheel chair access	Helen Robinson
1:30 - 5 pm	Allan Brooks and Mack Laing Tour	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	16	Easy, no wheel chair access	Loys Maingon
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Innisfree Farm	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	20	Easy, wheel chair access	Chanchal Cabrera
1:30 - 5 pm	Mountainaire Avian Rescue Society	Car Pool from Filberg Centre Limited parking; Gravel paths limit Wheelchairs	16	Easy, no wheel chair access	Warren Warrtig
3 - 6:30 pm	Registration in Lobby of Filberg Centre				

Friday May 13th

Evening Activities

Time Activity		Location	Speaker
6 pm to 8 pm	Cash Bar Social		
6:30 pm to 8 pm	CVN Birthday Dinner		Loys Maingon M/C
8 pm	Presentation of Comox Valley Plant List	Filberg Conference Hall	Helen Robinson
8:15 pm	Keynote Speaker		Dr. Briony Penn

Comox Valley Herbaceous Plants, Shrubs and Trees with Helen Robinson

The short presentation celebrates the completion of the Comox Valley plant list, a project in the making for several years. Helen will touch on how her idea got started, why she felt qualified to tackle such an endeavor, people to thank along her journey, and her sense of accomplishment- a beautiful booklet of which she is very proud.

The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart-Cowan: Dr. Briony Penn.

Dr. Penn will provide a Keynote Presentation at the CVNS 50th Birthday Dinner on her latest book. "*The Real Thing*" is the first official biography of Ian McTaggart-Cowan (1910-2010), the "Father of Canadian Ecology" http://www.cowantherealthing.com/

Saturday, May 14th

Morning Activities

Time	Activity Location		Leader/Speaker
6 am - 8 am	Morning Birding Outing	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	Gordon Stewart
8 am - 9 am	Artisan Breakfast	Filberg Conference Hall	
8 am - 10 am	Registration in	Lobby of Filberg Cent	re
9 am - 12 pm	•		Kees Visser Chair
10:30 am - 10:45 am	BC Nature Federation Annual General Meeting	Filberg Conference Hall	Coffee Break
11:00 - Noon	Ailitual General Meeting	Hall	Steven Price Keynote Speaker

International Bird Conservation-Priorities for Canadians with Steven Price

Steven is President of Bird Studies Canada and previously worked with WWF-Canada for over 30 years. He brings a high level of expertise in Conservation Science and Endangered Species to the podium. In keeping with the theme of this year's conference, Steven will address Canadian Bird Conservation issues in his presentation. www.birdscanada.org.

Saturday, May 14th

Afternoon Activities

Time	Activity	Location	Max	Difficulty	Leader
Noon - 1:30 pm		Lunch on you	r own		
11:45 -5:30 pm	Mitlenatch Bird Sanctuary	Car Pool, from Filberg Centre. Boat trip Bring a bag lunch and water Time Sensitive	10	Easy, no wheel chair access	Genevieve Singleton & Guy Monty
1 - 3 pm	ВС	Naturalists' Foundation AGM,	Filberg	Conference Room	
1:00 - 5:00 pm	Estuary Archaeology and Restoration	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	25	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Dan Bowen
1:30 - 4:45 pm	Cumberland Community Forest	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	20	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Andrew Nicoll & Meaghan Cursons
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Vancouver Island University Research Station	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	25	Easy, wheel chair access	Staff
1:30 pm - 5 pm	Vanier Garry Oaks & Towhee Creek	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	16	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Jack Minard
1:30 - 5: 30 pm	Tree Island Sand Dunes	Car Pool from Filberg Centre and open boat; Tree Island Waiver Required	12	Easy, no wheel chair access	Loys Maingon
1:15 - 4:30 pm	Morrison Creek Headwaters	Car Pool from Filberg. Limited to 4 cars due to parking	16	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Jim Palmer and Jan Gemmell
1:30 - 4 pm	Bear Creek Park & Wood Ducks	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	16	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Mandy & Charley Vaughan
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Innisfree Farm	Car Pool from Filberg Centre	20	Easy, wheel chair access	Chanchal Cabrera
1:30 - 4 pm	Environmental Poetry Tour	Car Pool from Filberg Centre; Air Park Playground	16	Easy, wheel chair access	Kevin Flesher
3 - 6:30 pm	Registration in Lobby of Filberg Centre				

Saturday, May 14th

Evening Activities

Time Activity		Location	Speaker				
Saturday Night Banquet with Cash Bar							
6:00 pm - 8 pm	6:00 pm - 8 pm Social, Cash Bar Filberg Conference Hall						
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	AGM Banquet	Filberg Conference Hall	Loys Maingon M/C				
7:30 pm - 8 pm	Awards	Filberg Conference Hall	Pat Westheuser and Alan Burger				
8 pm - 9 pm	Key Note Speaker	Filberg Conference Hall Dr. Val Schaef Loys Maingon I					
9 pm - 10 pm	Raucous Auction	Filberg Conference Hall Loys Maingon					
10 pm	10 pm Hall closes Filberg Centre						

<u>Impacts of Climate Change on the Friends and Enemies</u> of Garry Oak Ecosystems with Val Schaefer.

Garry Oak Ecosystems are embedded in larger meta-communities with species not identified with this endangered ecosystem but play a major role in its resilience. Mycorrhizae and pathogens, examples of friends and enemies, are affected by climate change as well as the species of Garry Oak Ecosystems themselves. Val will speculate on the potential general impact of friends and enemies of Garry Oak Ecosystems in light of climate change through a discussion of ecological memory, ecological thresholds and provenance.

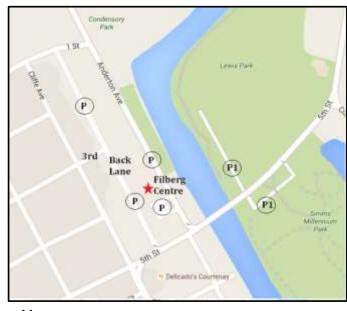
Sunday, May 15th

Morning Activities

Time		Location	Max	Diffigults	London
Time	Activity	Location	Max	Difficulty	Leader
8 am to 12 pm	Tree Island Sand Dunes	Car Pool and open boat; Tree Island Waiver Required; Return about 12 pm	12	Easy, no wheel chair access	Loys Maingon
8:30 am to 3 pm	Quadra Island (Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre) & Salmon BBQ	Bus at Filberg Centre, Upper Parking Lot; T ime Critical due to BC Ferries: 2 nd floor no wheel chair access	20	Easy, some wheel chair access	Staff
8 am to 12:45 pm	Mitlenatch Island Bird Sanctuary	Car Pool, Boat Bring a snack and water. Time Sensitive; Returns about 1 pm	10	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Genevieve Singleton & Guy Monty
8 am to TBA	Mount Helliwell & Hornby Island	Car Pool, Two BC Ferry trips included. Bring water and a snack as neither available in Park	16	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Tim Ennis
9 am to Approx. 1 pm	Comox Lake Bluffs Ecological Reserve	Car Pool departs Filberg at 9:00	14	Moderate, no wheel chair access	Helen Robinson

Downtown Parking

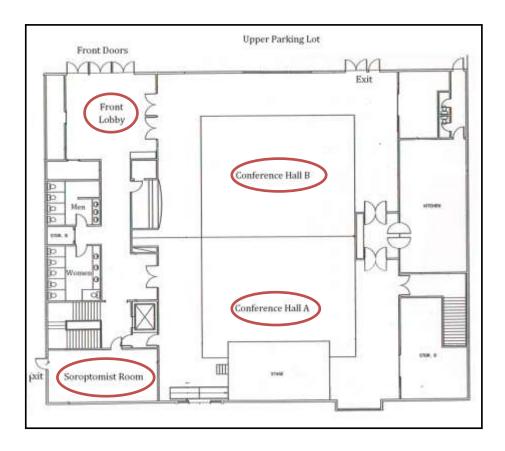
Main parking is in the Upper lot beside the Filberg Centre (the "Back Lane"), in the Lower lot beside the Filberg Centre, or along Anderton Avenue. Parking in Lewis Park or Simms Millennium Park (P1) is locked after dark, and is only recommended for day use. The by-law enforcement branch has advised us that they will be lenient on the 2-hour limit around the Filberg, but the2-hour limit in the downtown core is strictly policed.



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Filberg Centre

<u>Upper Floor</u>



Filberg Centre

Lower Floor



Downtown Restaurants and Eateries



Drive to Restaurants and Eateries



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