



Langley Field Naturalists



To encourage nature appreciation, conservation and education

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Newsletter

Supplement to June 2020

LANGLEY FIELD NATURALISTS (LFN) SEPTEMBER 2019 TO JUNE 2020 As reported to BC Nature for the Annual Report



Langley Field Naturalists enjoying a beautiful evening at Brydon Lagoon
Photo: John Gordon

The Langley Field Naturalists looked forward to our coming year full of field trips, exciting talks, community events and projects. Now at the end of April, as some activities stopped, we are making adaptations because of the COVID-19 shutdown.

Our usual slate of excellent speakers at each monthly meeting included Alan Burger BC Nature's Past President on his voyage to Antarctica. Also, member Dr. David Clements presented Australia's "Mesmerizing Mammals, Implausible Plants & Absurd Birds!" We had an average of two field trips each month, including to Brydon Lagoon and Blackie Spit. Our community activities included participating in Campbell Valley Country Celebration with our Butterfly display board and butterfly activities for kids, Rivers Day at the end of September, followed by Heritage Apple Day in October. The LFN also participated in the Surrey/White Rock /Langley Christmas Bird count on December 28, and we also took part in the Langley section of the Alouette count on January 4. On February 29, many members participated in the

Fort Langley Bird Count.

To celebrate the Langley Field Naturalists' 50th Anniversary in 2023, members led by Bob Puls, will produce a history book of our activities and accomplishments. At our first history book meeting in January, we considered a list of subjects. A copy of the 50th-anniversary history report done by the Vancouver Natural History from 1999 served as an example. We now have to research our early days and have a long list of conservation projects to study before we can begin our writing.

We wanted a lasting memorial for our long-time member Rhys Griffiths who contributed so much to the Langley Field Naturalists before he passed away. Rhys lived on Brydon Lagoon, making it appropriate to install a memorial there. After Langley City approved our proposal, we got to work. We found a stonemason, reviewed rock sizes, colours, shapes; set a budget; met with his family regarding the inscription; we even needed to select the best font! Many thanks to Lilianne Fuller for all her work on this! The City installed the memorial along with three trees on April 24; however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, there were no attendees. A proper ceremony will occur at a later date.

To celebrate Earth Day and to engage other stewardship groups and the public, The Membership Participation Committee began planning an event. To start, Lilianne applied for and received a grant from the Township of Langley for funding and an organizing committee was formed. We met to set the date, discuss a venue, plan the refreshments, map out the room for placement of tables, and decide what audio and electrical equipment we needed. We invited local environmental groups to attend and bring interactive displays. Nora successfully secured a room at the George Preston Community Centre. However, because of COVID-19 restrictions announced mid-March, our event is postponed until Earth Day 2021.

The Forslund Watson Committee led by Ryan Usinek and his team continues to work at maintaining and improving the habitat for this nature reserve we manage with the Province. As the team worked cleaning the bat boxes, they developed a growing interest in bats and their value. Ryan applied to BC Nature and received a support grant for their Bat Exploration Project. This grant will partially fund the purchase of an Echo Touch 2 Pro meter, and other miscellaneous items to conduct bat monitoring. The project has a goal of allowing Langley Field Naturalists to identify areas in Langley where bats frequent and possibly identify roosting sites. The use of this meter will also allow us to identify species that will further our work to conserve bats and educate the public. Ryan has recently purchased our meter! We now have our "technical team" to help us work out the kinks before we launch phase 2 of our Bat Exploration Project.

We continued with our surveys at the Milaster property, as requested by the Township of Langley. In our preliminary study, we found two species of concern, the Oregon Forest Snail and the Pacific Sideband Snail. Japanese Knotweed, an invasive species, has also been observed. Several members led by Bob, met in November at the property to blaze trails and catalogue plant and animal species for the biodiversity study. The Township of Langley demolished the buildings at Milaster late in 2019, and LFN could not access the property until completion of the work. In March, we were able to return to continue a plant and animal survey. Signs of spring were visible with fawn lilies and snowdrops, beaver and raccoon tracks, and heron footprints.

The Display Committee led by Anne Gosse decided that this year's display theme is Wetlands, and they needed to provide exhibits and activities to support this. The committee designed a Wetland Poster for the stand-up display board with pictures of wetland creatures and plants contributed by members. They found a new craft online with cut-outs of wetland birds and animals to be coloured and folded into 3D works of art.

The LFN conducted a Crow Roost study in south Aldergrove (about 16 Ave and 252 St) that began in January. The goal was to get a baseline number of crows in the roost by counting as the crow commute enters at the end of the day. Over three evenings, observers watched from several locations.

Gathering at 4:30 pm for the first survey on January 21, observers watched the crows gathering from all directions and heading into the roost, vying for the best positions to roost for the night. The average total for the three nights was 37,000 crows! Another survey will take place in February 2021 for comparison.

The David Hancock Foundation asked for volunteers from the LFN to watch and report activity at Bald Eagle nests in our area. Gareth led the study, armed with a map of nest locations for the project. LFN observers are looking for eagles sitting on a nest, possibly laying eggs and raising young.

LFN volunteered to host BC Nature's AGM in 2021 because no other club had offered. We formed an enthusiastic committee ably led by Sheila Puls to find a venue, speakers and field trip leaders.

Through meetings and dedicated volunteers, we successfully booked Langley Golf Centre and found committed speakers and field trip leaders. However, in April, due to the coronavirus restrictions, the Princeton's 2020 AGM was cancelled and rescheduled to 2021. The LFN postponed our AGM plans, and we are looking forward to attending the 2021 AGM hosted by the Vermillion Forks Naturalists in Princeton.

In May, we will hold our Executive meeting on Zoom to plan our AGM, usually held in June. An online AGM is a possibility for holding our elections and approving our financial statements. The process of "Our Volunteer of the Year Award" can be explored.

Many shared reports from Langley Field Naturalists relate to exploring and enjoying Nature on their own during this time. I look forward to normalcy when we can resume enjoying Langley's natural beauty together again!

Submitted by Kathy Masse



Counting crows Photo: Lisa Dreves