

Subject: OCCP March 2012 Newsletter



Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program

'Working together for conservation planning in the Okanagan Basin'

March 2012 Newsletter

Message from the OCCP Interim Coordinator

I'm excited that spring is noticeably in the air and on the horizon! This month the OCCP will move the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy project* forward with our first official Steering Committee meeting planned for March 20th. We will also be assisting Allan Brooks Nature Centre with the launch of the *All Things Natural project* this month with the on-line database coming soon to www.okcp.ca. It looks like it's shaping up to be an eventful year for the OCCP. I wish all our partners success in their upcoming ventures.



Aaron Deans - OCCP Interim
Coordinator

Feature Partner - SOKS

Science Opportunities for Kids - SOKS

[SOKS](#) with The [Central Okanagan Naturalists Club](#) (CONC), the City of Kelowna, a local neighborhood association and a local contractor are collaborating on a three year project to enhance and rehabilitate the wetland ecosystem at Chichester wetlands in Rutland.

Chichester wetlands are fed by Gopher Creek to the east whose source is outside the city limits in Black Mountain. Gopher Creek has been diverted underground for approximately 4.1 km from Springfield Road to the park. The outflow, called Frances Brook, winds west to join the Mill Creek Linear Corridor. Francis Brook is a tributary of Mill Creek that flows from the Chichester wetland complex west under Highway 97 for approximately 925 m.



Chichester Park is a publicly accessible natural area park of approximately 4.3 hectares.



Cattail. Chichester vegetation is dominated by introduced species such as Siberian Elm, weeping willow, Russian Olive and weedy species such as burdock

SOKS is concerned that all children have access within walking distance to healthy and exemplar ecosystems, particularly wetlands, that support a good representation of native habitats. We believe that every child should be able to walk from home to visit a typical Okanagan ecosystem and to participate in watching and or stewarding a nature scape close to home. Our goal at Chichester is to ensure that children can visit a working wetland where ecosystem processes, habitats and wildlife species can be experienced and where children and their families may get some inspiration.

Environmental education is more effective when kids break loose from their technology, travel out from their classrooms and visit places to participate in activities that engage and are fun. SOKS programs embrace science, art and physical activities. In 2012 our focus for school programs will be centered on Chichester and north Rutland schools.

Community outreach and engagement is paramount to success and rehabilitation and enhancement that moves Chichester habitats to include more native species and discontinues intrusive

and invasive species. With the assistance of Mike Kamann from [ILR Nursery](#) on the ground mapping is currently in progress.

SOKS would also like to report that they have concluded a successful second eco art project **Art Meets Science EcoArt : Celebrating the Ecosystems of Kelowna** last fall with Lake Country fibre artist [Pippa Dean Veerman](#). See this [video link](#) to watch a few animated images about their endeavor .



OCCP Project Updates

All Things Natural

The [Allan Brooks Nature Centre](#) will launch a collaborative public education and community engagement project this month called *All Things Natural*. The project is aimed at promoting enjoyment and increasing public awareness and appreciation of nature in the Okanagan. Over 30 nature-oriented not-for-profit organizations are lined up to make contributions. There are three main components to the project, which will run over the next year, these include:

- 1) an on-line archival database, hosted at www.okcp.ca, which will contain regionally relevant information about nature;
- 2) a bi-weekly newspaper column appearing first in the Vernon Morning Star at the end of March; &
- 3) a bi-weekly photo contest that will focus on nature-themed photo entries first from youth then from general public.

Nature in the context of this project includes all forms of nature (geology to astronomy) as well as nature-related human activities (e.g., recreation, park trails, etc.) and nature-sustaining economies (e.g.,

agriculture, forestry, tourism, etc.). Nature also includes traditional animal and plant uses and legends. We look forward to receiving our partner contributions of information over the next year and if you have any questions about nature that have always bugged you to know, please send your question to askanaturalist@gmail.com.

March updates provided by Susan Latimer.

Mid Shuswap SEI (OCCP)

Maps are complete and sent to Anna at RDNO for printing. The date for the public presentation is set for March 19 at the White Valley Community Centre at 7 pm. Invitation letters to landowners have been drafted and are being sent out by RDNO. An article about the project and notice of the meeting has been submitted to White Valley Times.

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (OCCP)

Data: Caslys has now regained access to the provincial LRDW.

Mapping: Conservation Rankings are complete and will be reviewed by Anne, Kristi and Alison on the 19th and presented at a steering committee meeting at RDCO on the 20th of March. Documents: Susan has collated comments received from partners who reviewed the Basin Draft framework document. These comments will be sent to the writer Kelly Garcia mid month for a final draft to meet grant requirements. Susan is continuing to develop a framework for the connectivity document. Terms of Reference are still under review and comments are still being accepted. The ToR will be discussed further at the March 20th Steering Committee meeting.

Funding: Susan reviewed Patrick's Letter of Intent to the Bullitt Foundation for funding to support a collaborative education/outreach project on regional ecosystem inventories.

Kalamalka & Wood Lake AHI (OCCP)

Susan submitted a grant to Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) Feb 17th

BX Creek Wetland Creation and Interpretive Trail Project (ABNC)

Aaron, Susan and Project Manager William met on next stages and wrap up requirements for the Ecoaction part of the project funding.

News



Science Opportunities for Kids (SOKS) outing

The Central Okanagan Regional District is looking for a summer student - [link to job description](#)

New Links - check out over 15 new links to water planning resources on the [OKCP website](#).

The Mid Shuswap River Sensitive Ecosystem Mapping Project Update - *Featured in Whitevalley Times Newspaper*
You may have seen the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) mapping crew checking plots along the Shuswap River this last August. This field work was the second part of a project that was initiated in 2006 in conjunction with Tom Minor's (White Valley Resource Centre) Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping (SHIM) between Wilsey Dam and Sugar Lake. The purpose of this inventory was to identify rare and fragile terrestrial ecosystems, and to support land-use decisions that will ensure their continued integrity. [Read more](#)

Celebrate Earth Day at Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary with Eco Art!

The public is invited to come to Coldstream's **Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary** on Sunday, April 22 from 12 noon – 4 PM to celebrate Earth Day. The sanctuary will be the site of multiple Eco Art projects created especially for the bird sanctuary by artists and creative writers. The Eco Art will be interactive, kid-friendly, and terrific fun for all ages. [Read More..](#)

For more information about the Eco Art project, contact Nancy Holmes at 250-807-9369. For more information about the sanctuary contact Aaron Deans at 250-542-5122.



April 22, noon-4pm. At 12408 Coldstream Creek Rd.

Upcoming Events

Mon Mar 19

[Canada Water Week](#)

Thu Mar 22 @06:30 - 07:15

[Seed Swap and Sale](#)

Thu Mar 22 @07:30 -

[Permaculture in Your Future/GM Foods and Your Health](#)

Thu Mar 29 @08:30 - 04:00

[Thompson-Okanagan Climate Action Exchange](#)

Sat Mar 31 @08:30 - 09:30

[Earth Hour](#)

Mon Apr 2 @8pm

[Tarring the Spirit Bear: Pipelines, People & Profits](#)

Fri Apr 13 @ 5:30 to 9:30pm

[Allan Brooks Nature Centre - Dinner and Auction](#)

[View All Events](#)

Please contact Patrick (patrick @ okcp.ca) if you have any news or events to post to the OKCP website or information to share in upcoming OCCP newsletters. For up to date information on OCCP partnered projects, resources and events, please check out the OKCP at www.okcp.ca.



ABNC - "Name those Birds Contest" Come down to Harris Flowers (3118 30th Ave, Vernon) for your chance to win a 2012 ABNC Family Membership. Simply fill out a ballot by completing the names of the above four birds species and you could WIN? 2-for-1 day passes to ABNC will also be drawn weekly and all ballots have a chance to win a season's pass for the whole family. A-Canyon, B-Black-capped, C-Hairy, D-Western. Hint: All four species can be found in the North Okanagan. Good Luck!



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