

NATURE BAY



SALMON ARM BAY
NATURE
ENHANCEMENT
SOCIETY

NATURE BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society
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SPRING
2008

BRIGHOUSE NATURE CENTRE OPEN HOUSE

ON MAY 31 THE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE BE-
COMES THE BRIGHOUSE NATURE CENTRE IN
HONOUR OF THE WORK AND DEDICATION TOM
BRIGHOUSE HAS GIVEN THE SOCIETY
OVER ITS 20 YEAR HISTORY.



The BNC is now officially open for the summer season 7 days a week from 10AM to 4:30PM. **Elizabeth Connor** has been employed for a second season to be our representative on week days and **John MacVicar** will work weekends.

An official "Ribbon Cutting" dedication of the BNC will be held at **12 Noon on Saturday May 31st, 2008.**

Tom Brighthouse has been the glue in the SABNES organization for the last 12 years. Thank you Tom for making Salmon Arm such a nice place to live. Born at home in the village of Forton, Lancashire England "a product of midwifery care" Tom emigrated to Canada in 1956 with his new bride, Elsie, to take teaching positions in Salmon Arm, BC. Tom worked for the Shuswap school district for 33 years and was the first principal of Shuswap School in 1967.

Tom has been and continues to be committed to improving the community of Salmon Arm for over 50 years, here are few of his activities and achievements.

- Salmon Arm Tennis Club president for 10 years late '50s early '60s.
- Founding leader of Shuswap Singers early '60s.
- Helped establish Minor Soccer in Salmon Arm '70s.
- First member of **SABNES**, preserving the natural heritage of our bay.
- Helped bring the gazebo to the marine park early '90s.
- On Salmon Arm municipal council 1990-1996.
- Played a major role in preserving library building for the Art Gallery.
- Introduced tree bylaw preserving trees within municipal boundaries.
- Supervised the construction of the Turner Creek Trail in the early '90s.
- Instrumental in the construction of the Raven Waterfront Trail.
- Member of the Okanagan Regional Library board in the early '90s.
- 1st chairman of the Shuswap Community Foundation.
- On the North Okanagan Health Region Board for two years.

Important Bird Area Application Update by Joyce Henderson

The application to have the Salmon Arm Bay designated as an Important Bird Area was completed by Ed Dahl and Joyce Henderson in February and mailed to the BC committee of the IBA. We have yet to hear whether our application was successful. There were seven main features of the Bay described in detail in the application.

1. The Western Grebe nesting colony with an average of 250 birds. Annual statistics on the numbers of family pairs, the number of young, and the average family size since the early 1990s were included.

2. The large number of juvenile shorebird that feed on the mudflats from August to October each year on their southern migration. 35 species have been recorded in the Bay with an annual estimated number of 14,000 of the combined species.

3. The wide diversity of species. 247 species have been recorded.

4. The numbers of Tundra and Trumpeter Swans

that rest and feed in the Bay.

5. The Ring-Billed Gull colony.

6. The large number of swallows of all five species. 5,000 at a time have been counted feeding over the water and mudflats.



Data and information from many sources were included in the application. For the Western Grebe data the work of Frank and Doris Kime over many years was included.

Don Cecile, a recognised expert on shorebirds and the BC regional editor to *North American Birds*, lives in Vernon and regularly, from early August to early October, counts the shorebirds in the Salmon Arm Bay.

He submitted a summary of his findings to be included in the application. He described

the mudflats as "a reliable stop-over and fueling station for thousands of young-of-the-year shorebirds, those most at risk yet those that will contribute to population growth. There is no other location in the interior of British Columbia that even remotely compares to the mudflats of Salmon Arm, in its reliability to attract shorebirds, but also in the numbers and diversity of species present".

He receives and compiles bird data from around the province annually and only Boundary Bay boasts more diversity and larger numbers. In his opinion, **Salmon Arm is the Boundary Bay of the interior.**



Here is a sample of a **SABNES postcard** being published and going on sale at the Brighthouse Interpretive Centre this summer.

Ian James, photographer, has generously allowed us to reproduce his pictures for these cards. The Osprey photo shown was taken locally last year. The cards go on sale in June and cost \$1.00 each.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SABNES, 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING:

Not until the late 1980's did the community of Salmon Arm begin to realize the importance of the natural values of its waterfront. Most of the bay is a shallow estuary of the Salmon River. In this area the water tolerant grasses feed invertebrates which nourish large numbers of first year salmon. The slower fish are an important food supply for the threatened Western Grebe and the Clark's Grebe. The mudflats are an important staging place in spring and particularly in the fall for thousands of shorebirds. Some reports have shown that first the males then the females and finally the young by instinct alone find this rich feeding place where they fatten up before their next long flight south.

In 1988 a committee was formed to promote the purchase of about forty hectares of wetland by Nature Trust BC. This committee became the Nature Bay Society headed by six appointed and six elected board members. Their first task was to ensure that four kilometres of shoreline were preserved forever. Since then the area has been enlarged by the creation of a four



hectare island which was built when the marina was dredged. The society arranged for the island to be planted and sculpted, creating mounds and lagoons.

In the second phase, boardwalks were built, trails pushed through and a bird tower erected overlooking the new island where a gull colony and an osprey nest are located. Elsewhere, with the help of Ducks Unlimited, two lagoons were created. Another major task was to create and place exclusion buoys 500 metres from high water, which warn boaters of the sensitive breeding area. Two bird blinds were built in good locations overlooking the richer birding spots.

Ducks Unlimited and Nature Bay Society have also worked with the First Nations Adam's River Band to restore habitat on their land.

In the third phase, a Nature House was set up near the band shell gazebo in Marine Park. By 2004, with regular additions to its assets, the centre has become a real attraction worthy of repeated visits. The staff can show you a video of dancing grebes, a DVD of birds of the bay, a collection of stuffed and carved birds, a book collection and a computer program with which visitors may check out birds and their songs.

In addition, the foot and cycle trail was extended to the Raven subdivision, four kilometres from the Nature House. Leashed dogs are permitted only for the first kilometre, which is as far as the sanctuary gate.

By counting birds each week from 1999 to 2008, the Shuswap Naturalist Club was able to confirm a total of 240 bird species observed around the Salmon Arm Bay, an impressive total when compared with the 480 species reported for the whole of British Columbia.

So where do we go from here? Will we be an officially appointed Important Bird Area? What visions do we have for the Salmon Arm Bay and what part will SABNES play in it? Our fourth phase may well be to look ahead to what needs to be done in the next 20 years. Without this vision the future seems uncertain, I think it's time for reflection on the past and taking a look to the future. Please feel free to contact us with your ideas and comments to preserve the wonderful resource we have at our doorstep.

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Joyce Henderson	832-4127

Appointed Directors

Gary Carder, Naturalist Club	832-4171
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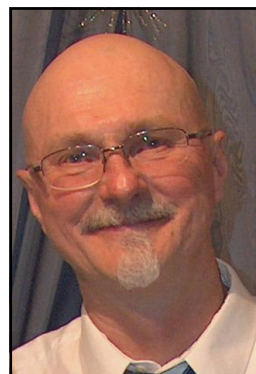
Non-voting Directors

Tom Brighthouse, Secretary	832-3951
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Thanks to Yves Cusson of **Cusson Tree Service** for donating his time and energy to remove 2 old Osprey nests this spring. The nests were removed from the tops of platform poles to discourage the nest being taken over by geese that typically start nesting prior to the arrival of the Osprey in the spring.

Also thanks to Ron DeVuyst at **Maple Reinders Inc.** (General Contractors for the new SA Water Treatment Plant) for donating the concrete for the new west gate installation.



The Last Word by Ron Wedman:

While working on the west gate to the trails recently, I became aware of the large number of appreciative folk using the trails for recreation. Of the many lovely trails in Salmon Arm, I would guess that our foreshore trail is one of the most popular. I am glad we have a way of connecting to nature close to the community. **Thank you Salmon Arm for supporting our efforts to keep the wonderful wetlands wild.**