

PGNC AGM 2017 - EXECUTIVE REPORT

Overview of 2016

In 2016, the Club hosted a successful BC Nature Fall General Meeting, continued its work on the Hudson's Bay Wetland Project, and initiated a new group, the Wednesday Walkers. The presentation nights scheduled every third Thursday of the month at the Exploration Place are thriving, providing members with interesting topics by speakers from the Prince George community. Vice-President, Heather Meier was exceptional as Acting President while President, Shanelle Marshall was away from February to August.

BC Nature Fall General Meeting (FGM) "Northern Treasures: Fish, Fur and Feathers" September 22-25, 2016

After over two years of commendable and countless volunteer hours spent planning for the Fall General Meeting, FGM Organizing Committee members were able to see the fruits of their labor come to mature in the form of an engaging and exciting weekend at the Coast Inn of the North. More than 100 naturalists attended from around the province! Aside from the Fall General Meeting itself, attendees could participate in field trips to: Eskers Provincial Park, Hudson's Bay Wetland and Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park, Forests for the World, Cottonwood Island Park and Railway Museum, Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Centre, Huble Homestead, Moore's Meadow, Pine le Moray and the Ancient Forest Provincial Park.

On the first night, a Welcome Social featured local member Mike Nash and his "An Illustrated Tour of Prince George and Northern BC". On Friday, northern researchers and explorers delivered engaging presentations covering a variety of topics from moose management to hiking and technology in the North, to the inland rainforest. Evening keynote speakers were Charles Helm ("The Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark - a First for Western North America") and Chris Harris ("Cariboo Chilcotin Coast: A Sense of Place"). On the final night, the BC Nature Club Service Award was awarded to Anne Hogan and Clive Keen for their tireless work on the Hudson's Bay Wetland Project.

Such a smooth running, successful event could not have been possible without the work of the FGM Organizing Committee and the support of local volunteers who donated their time. In addition, the Committee is very grateful for the outstanding assistance provided by two honorary members of the Committee: Rob Watt who designed, maintained and continually adapted the FGM website, and Mike Nash who contributed his marketing skills and extensive knowledge of Prince George and region.

FGM Organizing Committee 2016

Official Members

Allan Carson - Chair
Maryanne Reavie - Registration
Heather Sapergia - Accommodation & Venue
Sandra Hepburn - Field Trips
Sandra Kinsey - Financials
Donella Kean - Financials
Sara Sparks - BC Nature Communications
Angie Joiner - Graphics Designer
Shanelle Marshall - Silent Auction

Honorary members

Rob Watt
Mike Nash

Hudson's Bay Wetland Project

The Club made excellent progress on the Wetland Project in 2016 with the construction of two observation decks overlooking the pond west of Queensway: a high observation deck on the north side, and an Overlook on the Heritage Trail on the south side. Five expert volunteers from the Caledonia Ramblers built the decks in three weeks in October. The Club and the Ramblers have been partners on this project since 2014. The four decks built to date could not have happened without their assistance.

Several work projects east of Queensway helped to reduce the volume of common tansy and other invasive plants. We received invaluable assistance from GroundworkPG, the AIMHI Manual Weed Control crew, Northwest Invasive Plant Council and Club members on these work projects. The Club and the Prince George VLA Enhancement Association worked together during the Annual Citywide Clean-up in April to remove garbage and litter along the Heritage Trail waterway that drains into the Wetland.

All this was made possible thanks to grants from TransCanada, Pacific Salmon Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, The Calgary Foundation, BC Nature and Fortis BC. The project also received donations from Canadian Homebuilders' Association Northern BC and a number of individual donors.

Trips and Events

The Annual Swan Count to Crooked River was held in January as well as a trip to UNBC to learn about bird specimen preparations and collections by Dr. Ken Otter. The Club participated in community events such as Seedy Saturday at The Exploration Place, the Travelling World Community Film Festival and BC Rivers Day. Local birders guided members on an owling trip, curlew viewing, a nature stroll around Wilkins Park and endured the sweet aromas of Shelley Lagoons. Wednesday Walkers was initiated and now has regularly scheduled walks on local trails appreciating nature along the way. In late fall, a field trip to Kennedy Siding took place to view Mountain Caribou.

Gifts-in-kind and other supports

The Club is very grateful for gifts-in-kind provided by our partners and suppliers. For the past three years our partner, The Exploration Place, has hosted the Club's presentation nights from September to May and provided coffee and tea for attendees, all at no charge to the Club. In 2015 and 2016 McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. made in-kind contributions of \$3,500 toward the costs of surveying, design and approvals related to the Hudson's Bay Wetland project. In 2016 the Caledonia Ramblers Club contributed 195 hours of volunteer time to construction of both observation decks, plus additional time for planning and construction coordination, for an in-kind contribution in the range of \$3,000.

REAPS has provided invaluable supports to the Club by co-sponsoring Wetland-related grant applications since 2014. As a registered charity, REAPS then holds the funds and disburses them on behalf of the Club when we are ready to pay the bills. In 2016 the Parks staff of the City of Prince George unfailingly provided the Club with help and support for clean-up, construction, and invasive plant removal at the Wetland. A special thanks goes to Councillor Jillian Merrick for nominating the Club for a Fortis BC grant to help with construction of the Heritage Trail Overlook in October 2016.

Looking ahead

Our Club membership continues to grow - including Student memberships - as we hope to reach our goal of 100 memberships by the Club's 50th anniversary in 2019. This year (2017) will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Christmas Bird Count in Prince George - as we approach December keep a weather eye open for notifications about a big celebration!

This year, Club President, Shanelle Marshall is stepping down from her role and leaving the Executive. She has been a director on the Executive since 2013, with one year spent as Vice-President and the past three years as President. After following in Clive Keen's (Past President) footsteps, there were rather big shoes to fill, which she still feels she would not fit. He is an inspired natural leader and a fine example to follow. While planning and participating in Club events alongside the Executive and other PGNC members, she has delighted in helping to strengthen and grow the Club. It has been the ideal place to foster her passion for volunteering in the community while boosting awareness and appreciation for the natural world. Shanelle feels immensely grateful for the opportunity to work with all of the Executive, who freely shared their knowledge and experience helping her to not only develop into a better President but a better naturalist as well. She would like to thank all of the current directors for their mentorship and support over the past four years and wishes the Executive of 2017 the best in all their endeavours!

Respectfully submitted,

Shanelle Marshall, President
Anne Hogan, Secretary
Sara Sparks, BC Nature Director
Sandra Hepburn, Director
Angie Joiner, Director
Marcia Waller, Director
Doug Wilson, Director

Heather Meier, Vice-President
Sandra Kinsey, Treasurer
Allan Carson, Director
Dora Hunter, Director
Clive Keen, Director
Emily Williams, Director