



BURKE MOUNTAIN NATURALISTS

Promoting Nature Awareness in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and beyond

Shaping Riverview Horticultural Centre Society's Future

By Edie Kernighan

At our Annual General Meeting, held on December 9, 2025, Riverview (səmiqʷəʔelə) Horticultural Centre Society was chosen as the designated non-profit organization for funds raised in the silent auction.

The Riverview Lands are a living landscape, always full of new stories. Explore the latest updates on our work to preserve these historic grounds and stay connected with the life of the Riverview Lands by visiting their website, <https://rhcs.org/news>. Learn about upcoming events or become a member or donor.

Thank you to all the members, guests and Como Lake United Church staff for making this a successful event by volunteering and donating items and money to raise funds and awareness about the importance of preserving the Riverview

(səmiqʷəʔelə) lands and trees.

Be sure to catch the first tree walk of the year on April 12, 2026, from 1 to 3 pm! <https://rhcs.org/tree-tours>



Ian McArthur presents a cheque to Linda Asgiernesson of Riverview Horticulture Centre Society.
Photo: Edie Kernighan

BMN Photo Contest: Spot the FIRST BUMBLE BEE of Spring

By Victoria Otton

By the time you read this, some queen bumble bees may have already emerged from their solitary winter hibernation underground. They'll be flying about on warmer days, searching for a good nesting site (sometimes an old mouse burrow) for this year's brood.

NOW is the time to get out with your camera and enter BMN's sixth annual 'Spot the First Bumble Bee' contest. Queen bumble bees are easy to spot – they're BIG, fuzzy and relatively slow moving. To make things even easier, bumble bees are often the only bees out in the early spring. However, don't be fooled by the Wanna-Bees out there! These are flies disguised as bees. Unlike bees, flies have eyes like ski-goggles and short antennae, and they don't gather pollen.

The contest rules are:

1. Spot your first bumble bee this spring and snap a few photos. The more photos you have, the easier it will be to identify your bee. Pay close attention to the coloured bands (if any) on the abdomen, as these are important guides for bumble bee identification.
2. Try to identify your bee. (Use iNaturalist or the info in this short [Bumble Bee ID Guide](#)). There are only about six bumble bee species that are common in our area. We can consult with bee experts to confirm or correct our identifications. Extra points for identifying the flower that your bee is on!
3. Submit your photos to BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com.
4. The earliest local bumble bee spotted will get its photo published in the next BMN newsletter.



The Common Eastern Bumble Bee (*Bombus impatiens*) is easy to identify. Each segment of its abdomen is black. Notice her long antennae and pollen baskets on her legs. This species is an escapee from the greenhouse industry and is now naturalized here. Photo: Victoria Otton

BMN Club Meeting
(in person)
“The Fraser River Challenge”
by Fin Donnelly
Tues Mar 10
7:30pm – 9:00pm
Como Lake United Church
535 Marmont St., Coq.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bear Spray 101 – Free Community Workshop at Mossom Creek Hatchery

Sun Mar 8, 1pm – 2:30pm

Join [Mossom Creek Hatchery and Education Centre](#) and Parks Canada Public Outreach & Education Officer, Joseph Daniels, to learn how to reduce conflict, understand bear behaviour, and use bear spray effectively and responsibly when it is needed. This interactive workshop will focus on practical skills for safely navigating wildlife encounters.

Held at the Mossom Creek Hatchery and Education Centre, 12 Mossom Creek Drive, Port Moody. Drive uphill about 1 km along the gravel road to reach the hatchery.

Free, but [registration](#) is required.

BMN MARCH MEETING (in person): “The Fraser River Challenge” Presented by Fin Donnelly

Tues Mar 10, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

The [Fraser River Challenge](#) is a 2026 initiative led by Fin Donnelly to protect 30% of the Fraser River Watershed by 2030. This campaign involves a 1000-km, 30-day expedition, and focuses on strengthening Indigenous stewardship and safeguarding salmon habitat from the Fraser headwaters to the Salish Sea.

Fin is PoCo-born, a former MLA and MP, and a dedicated environmentalist who has swum the entire length of the Fraser River two times (1995, and again in 2000) to promote Fraser River conservation.

Held at Como Lake United Church, 535 Marmont Street, Coquitlam.

Evening at the PoCo Museum: A Talk with Anna Tremere about the History of Riverview Hospital

Thurs Mar 19, 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Riverview Hospital looms large in the conversation about mental health services in BC, but how much do you actually know about this institution? Here's a chance to learn about the history of the hospital over the whole course of its operation. This talk will be presented by Anna Tremere, past president of the Riverview Historical Society, and a retired psychiatric nurse who spent a career serving the patients of Riverview. Anna's work in the historical society has been instrumental in recording Riverview's history.

Held at PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives, 150-2248 McAllister Street, Port Coquitlam.

Entry will be by donation at the door. You can reserve your spot on [Eventbrite](#).

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Water Quality Monitoring Projects Sun Mar 29, 9am – 10am

The usual day for these sessions is the last Sunday of the month, but the date is weather dependent. Check with the leaders for meeting places, dates and times. New volunteers are welcome! Monthly monitoring is done concurrently at two locations:

Como Lake – contact: Lori Austin at lorikaustin100@gmail.com.

Lost Lake and Mundy Lake in Mundy Park - contacts: [Chris Thomson](#).

BMN HIKE: Bert Flinn Park and Noons Creek Loop

Sat April 11 9am – 1:30pm

We haven't done this loop through north Port Moody since 2015. We will gain elevation steeply in some sections before wandering through Bert Flinn Park. The return downhill section will be on a lovely trail along Noons Creek before strolling on the Shoreline Trail to the starting point. We hope to see some new vegetation popping up. Roundtrip distance is 12 km with a cumulative elevation gain of 305 m. Please contact Ian at 604-939-4039 if you are planning on attending or for more information.

BMN APRIL MEETING (in person): “Ten ‘Must-Haves’ for Urban Forest Management”

Presented by Nancy Furness and James Bobick of TCUF

Tues April 14, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

Tri-Cities Urban Forest Working Group (TCUF) is a Coquitlam-based community organization advocating for the protection, enhancement, and sustainable management of local urban trees. Hear from TCUF founder Nancy Furness and horticulturalist James Bobick what we need to do to protect the urban tree canopy.

Held at Como Lake United Church, 535 Marmont Street, Coquitlam.

OWL Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society's Annual Open House

Sat May 30 & Sun May 31, 10am – 3pm

Mark your calendars for this event held at [OWL](#). There will be educational bird of prey talks, a raptor release each day at 1pm, and bird of prey meet and greets.

Visit our ambassadors birds, and enjoy a meal from various food trucks. Take a walk through our Wildlife Museum to learn about habitats and threats to wildlife, buy yourself a little something from our gift shop, and don't forget to stop by the kids zone for fun and games for all ages.

Entry is free, although an entry donation is appreciated. Please leave your pets at home where they will be comfortable. Parking will be available at the Boundary Bay Airport's north lot where there will be two shuttle buses waiting to take you to and from OWL. Noon Creek Hatchery, Wildlife Rescue, Northern Spotted Owl Breeding Program, Critter Care, and many more groups will be there.

OWL is located at 3800 72nd Street, Unit 3, Delta.

See the [BMN website](#) for more events!

Welcome to New Members

By Brian Wormald

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members to the club. Please look out for them at the next meeting or hike and extend your own personal welcome.

Port Moody:

- Hannah & Sam Smith (8 February 2026)

Coquitlam:

- Lilli Lowe & Tim Wong (7 February 2026)

Port Coquitlam:

- Cynthia Jones (3 February 2026)
- Derek Etheron & Emily Hsueh (20 February 2026)

Tales from the Trail – Birds of Prey Out and About

Date of Survey: February 15, 2026
'léxətəm Regional Park
(formerly Colony Farm)

By John Saremba

At the start of today's bird survey, the participants received two treats. First, we enjoyed clear and sunny skies to start our walk, which was a pleasure despite the frosty conditions. The second treat came in the form of delicious chocolate candy courtesy of Darlene H. in honour of her 100th time coming to the bird survey over the past five years on her pedal bike. This is no small feat, given the steep hills that she has to ride up on the return trip to her home. Job well done, Darlene! Other highlights from this bird survey included the following.

On the drive into the park en route to the Community Gardens parking lot, Christina and I happened to see a Cooper's Hawk perched in the tall deciduous tree at Station 4 by the Labyrinth.

As our group started to walk along the Perimeter Trail, we heard the first Red-winged Blackbird calls of this year during our surveys.

As we approached Station 1 (i.e., at the southwest corner of the park), several wildlife sightings captured our attention. A Red-tailed Hawk that had been seen regularly on previous recent surveys was once again perched in among the branches of a large linden tree. Unfortunately, several American Crows spotted the hawk and began to pester it, finally forcing the hawk to fly off and find solitude at another spot.



Red-tailed Hawk perched among the branches. Photo: John Saremba



Crows chasing a Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: John Saremba

Another interesting bird observation at this station was hearing the call of an Orange-crowned Warbler, which is quite unusual given that the migratory nature of these birds causes them to usually appear later in April and May. However, with the Merlin bird app confirming this distinctive call, and other recent reports of this bird species in the Metro Vancouver area, we felt confident in this observation identification. We also again heard the call of another Red-winged Blackbird, as well as the chatty noise from a Bewick's Wren.

Near Station 2 (i.e., by the Metro Vancouver works yard), we noticed an interesting small ice formation alongside the trail. This ice feature intrigued me and so I investigated it later online. Well, as with many nature-related observations, what started out as a simple quest resulted in a deep dive into the world of frost. Who knew that there were so many different types of frost, some of which were somewhat similar and challenging to identify. These formations include: Hoar Frost, Rime Ice, Surface Hoar Frost, and Frost Flowers or Hair Ice.



Interesting ice formation alongside the trail. Photo: John Saremba

Here are several links regarding frost formations, which include a relatively rare type of frost:

- Guide to Frost: <https://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/frost/frost.htm>
- Hoar Frost versus Rime Ice: <https://westvalleynaturalists.org/geography/hoar-frost-or-rime-ice-or-something-else/>
- Hair Ice article: <https://globalnews.ca/news/8543774/spotted-a-frost-flower-around-b-c-s-south-coast-heres-how-it-was-created/>

In examining my photos and these articles, I am left wondering if this is a Frost Flowers formation.

Station 2 also had a fair amount of bird activity including the first of several Fox Sparrows seen today, along with four Golden-crowned Sparrows joined by a boisterous Spotted Towhee. We were surprised to see just how

protective the Fox Sparrow was of its little patch of blackberry thicket. It created quite a ruckus in trying to force a House Finch to move along.



Fox Sparrow squawking at a House Finch. Photo: John Saremba

At the Station 3 wetland, while much of the east side wetland was frozen, the west side had several small open areas of water. Off in the distance, we did see some waterfowl in among the trees on the west side, including a group of Mallards. While here we also spotted two Great Blue Herons in the area, along with a Bald Eagle.

During today's survey, a number of Song Sparrows made their presence known. At the wetland area, two of these feisty little songbirds were briefly perched side by side just above the edge of the east side wetland area.



Pair of Song Sparrows at the wetland. Photo: John Saremba

When walking from Station 3 to Station 4, several of our sharp-eyed participants noticed that what appeared to be a rather large clump of brownish vegetation was actually a coyote peacefully resting in the sunlight in front of a blackberry thicket. When we stopped to quietly watch from a distance, the coyote briefly sat up and briefly looked our way. Then, realizing we did not present a threat, the coyote settled back down on the ground to continue enjoying the sunlight.



Coyote briefly noting visitors in the distance. Photo: John Saremba



Coyote returned to relax in the sunshine. Photo: John Saremba

At Station 4, two Northern Flickers were heard in the distance along with several Black-capped Chickadees and American Crows. The flickers seemed to be in mating mode, giving us a small performance with tail feathers flared and some synchronized head and neck movements. We also saw the first of several Anna's Hummingbirds observed during today's walk.

While walking toward Station 5, another Fox Sparrow made a brief appearance. Typically, these rather shy sparrow birds tend to hide among thickets and shrubs. Fortunately, for whatever reason, this one decided to make its presence known, providing us with a good view of this Fox Sparrow.



Fox Sparrow posing in the open. Photo: John Saremba

At Station 5, our observations included another Anna's Hummingbird, a Spotted Towhee, a Northern Flicker, and a Song Sparrow.

Station 6 produced another one of today's highlights with the first of several sightings of a male American Kestrel. I happened to get lucky with a photograph that provided an interesting perspective of one of this bird's important features as a bird of prey. One can appreciate how good a hunter this small falcon can be given its very sharp, large talons enabling it to efficiently capture and immobilize its prey.



Helps to have sharp, precise talons to grab prey. Photo: John Saremba

At Station 7, we had our closest view of a Red-tailed Hawk perched on the side of a transmission tower on the east side of the old field.

With the presence of an American Kestrel and a Red-tailed Hawk, little wonder it was quite quiet in terms of songbird calls and songs at this station with only a Song Sparrow briefly announcing its presence.



Red-tailed Hawk perched on transmission tower. Photo: John Saremba

On the walk back to the parking lot, we saw the American Kestrel fly across the old field, during which it stopped to perch on one of the bird nest box stands near Station 6. This is characteristic of the foraging behaviour of this falcon species.



Kestrel briefly perched on bird nest box while foraging. Photo: John Saremba

And so, the group enjoyed another delightful day on the trail with evidence of increased bird activity with the upcoming spring season.

URGENT NOTE: **BMN IS SEEKING A NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Our BMN newsletter editor, Joëlle Régnier, is moving to the green pastures of Vancouver Island and we are looking for a replacement editor.

We are looking for someone to be ready to take over for the June issue. Ideally, the new candidate would be available to learn about the job from Joëlle for the April or May newsletter.

Familiarity with word processing using MS Word, Google Docs or Pages and a knowledge of basic grammar are required. An interest in BMN's activities – or an interest in learning about them – is a plus!

This is a monthly task and involves editing each month's submissions for grammar and clarity, and deciding what should be the lead article. The editor is also responsible for inserting articles, photos and their captions, and hyperlinks into the template. They then email the completed file to our layout person, BMN member Catherine Ho. All this needs to be done within one week, usually the week immediately prior to the club meeting (2nd week of the month). There is always a backup editor available if necessary.

If you are interested in volunteering or are curious to know more about the position, please email BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com and we'll put you in touch with Joëlle.

Nature Watch (from January)

By Liz Thunstrom

Send your nature sightings to Liz at: elizabeththunstrom@telus.net

After a frosty spell, the gardens are starting to show the tips of bulbs – very early but very welcome. Hummingbirds are very active at the feeder on my porch, and several appeared to be briefly pairing up. It is always a surprise to see these tiny birds being so active in cold weather. They mate in early spring and will nest soon. The females then build the nest and care for their young entirely on their own. As soon as the babies are feathered and can fly, they must find food and survive without any parental help!

On January 25, the group of volunteers doing their monthly Water Rangers sampling were very surprised to see, on the thin skin of ice on Como Lake, a young river otter, diving and active! It is unusual to see water mammals here but often, in spring, last year's young otters and beavers will leave the family home in search of a place of their own.

There are quite a few otters at Colony Farm and it is likely that the otter followed Como Creek to the Lake. Sadly, it was gone the next day.

Bird Count Day on January 3 was extremely wet but a few brave souls managed to see two Brown Creepers hunting for insects on a large tree. A kingfisher was heard calling, but only after the count was completed.

Anytime you are outside is a great time to look and listen.



Otter spotted at Como Lake. Photo: David Randen



A Pair of Bald Eagles already staking their claim on an existing nest on the Pitt River near DeBoville Slough. Photo: Ronald Long

Burke Mountain Naturalists Membership (JANUARY TO DECEMBER)

- \$33 for an individual \$40 for a Family Membership
- NEW!** Post-Secondary Student Membership — \$10

Please email BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com for more information on our Student Membership option. We want to hear from you!

Our activities include:

- hiking
- bird watching and surveys
- invasive plant removal parties
- bat monitoring and conservation field trips
- nature walks
- attending local environmental/ community events with informative displays
- monthly public meetings, except over the summer, with a guest speaker (most invited presentations are available on our [YouTube channel](#))
- publishing 10 monthly digital newsletters (except over the summer)
- BC Nature quarterly magazine, Nature BC.



Please check our [Events Calendar](#) to see what's coming up!

MEMBERSHIP BE PURCHASED/RENEWED:

- Online at: <https://www.burkemountainnaturalists.ca/membership/>
- using Interac®, a credit card or Paypal®, under the tab named "Get Involved".
- Mail a cheque to BMN, P.O. Box 52540, R.P.O. Coquitlam Centre, Coquitlam, BC V3B 7J4

If you are contemplating switching to "electronic" payment, we urge you to use eTransfer in preference to PayPal. It's easier AND saves your club money. There are NO charges incurred for you OR the club for these bank transfers.

BMN is a registered non-profit society with charitable income status.

Name(s): _____
(Family adults at the same address)

Name(s): _____
(Family children under 19)

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

DEADLINE for the next BMN Newsletter
Saturday, April 4, 2026
Send articles to: bmnewsletter@gmail.com

The Burke Mountain Naturalists was formed in January 1989 and is a member club of BC Nature (formerly Federation of BC Naturalists). BMN is a registered non-profit Society with charitable income status.

Our objectives are:

- to promote the enjoyment of nature
- to foster an interest in, and an appreciation of, our environment
- to promote the accessibility and maintenance of natural areas, particularly local areas
- to actively pursue the conservation & preservation of the natural world

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Newsletter Editor: Joëlle Régnier, BMNnewsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter Design: Catherine Ho, catherineymho@icloud.com

BMN Publications: 10 newsletters a year (except July and August)

"Discover Nature in the Tri-Cities" 2015, (40 pages) a children's nature guide; available on our website (40 pages) and from local libraries

Natural History Brochures: Miller Park Ravine, DeBoville Slough, Riverview Lands, Coquitlam River Corridor

Bird Brochures: Minnehada Regional Park and Area, DeBoville Slough,

Como Lake, The Herons of Colony Farm and our checklist for the Colony Farm Park birds

Plant Brochures: Colony Farm, DeBoville Slough

Wildlife Inventory of the Shoreline Park System: 1994, (121 pages) is available on our website

Our Backyard Wilderness: A Park Proposal, by Mark Haddock, 1992, (23 pages, plus appendices) available at Coquitlam Poirier Library

The Riverview Hospital Site: "Respecting Its Past, Realizing Its Future", by Elaine Golds, Victoria Otton and Lori Austin (2004), 26 pages available on our website [website](#).