



BURKE MOUNTAIN NATURALISTS

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

The Fraser River Challenge: 30 Years, 30 Days, and a Bold Bid to Protect the Rivershed *Following a March 2026 presentation to the Burke Mountain Naturalists*

For those who attended the BMN monthly meeting in March, you heard firsthand about one of the most ambitious conservation campaigns underway in British Columbia — the Fraser River Challenge. Led by Fraser Riverkeeper Fin Donnelly, the campaign has a deceptively simple goal: protect 30% of the Fraser Rivershed's incredible habitat by 2030, with a longer-term vision of 50% by 2050.

For naturalists living in the shadow of Burke Mountain, the Fraser is not a distant abstraction. It is the system that shapes the landscape, feeding salmon runs we watch for each autumn, sustaining the ecological web from the Rockies to the Salish Sea. The Fraser Rivershed covers roughly 21 million hectares — nearly a quarter of British Columbia — and remains one of the largest wild salmon-producing river systems in the world. It is the cultural and ecological backbone for more than 70 First Nations and supports three-quarters of the province's population.

But the Fraser is under pressure. Habitat fragmentation, industrial activity, drought, and rising temperatures are pushing salmon populations, ecosystems, and communities toward a breaking point. The Fraser River Challenge argues that piecemeal restoration projects are no longer sufficient — what's needed is coordinated, permanent protection at the scale of the whole rivershed.

A Modern Expedition with Deep Roots

Many of you will remember Fin Donnelly's legendary swims of the Fraser in 1995 and 2000, which helped draw national attention to the river's importance. Thirty years later, Fin is back — not in the water this time, but leading a new generation on a 30-day expedition from August 6 to September 4, 2026.

The expedition will feature three simultaneous journeys. A 1,375-kilometre relay swim will be undertaken by a team of four women — Isabelle Côté, Michelle Connolly, Naomi Devine, and a fourth woman, a rotating Indigenous swimmer from Nations along the Fraser. A 1,080 km solo rivershed marathon walk by Justin Smith will connect upriver and downriver communities, gathering stories from residents, knowledge keepers, youth, and leaders. And a series of 15 canoe and two raft journeys will bring First Nations, organizations, and community paddlers onto the water together. The aim is not just athletic — it's to make the vast, complex Fraser system tangible and human-scaled, to tell the story of the river through the people who depend on it.

Indigenous Leadership at the Core

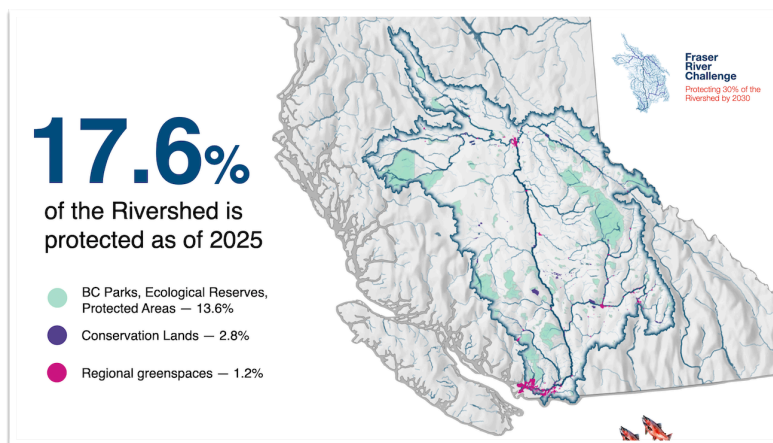
What distinguishes the Fraser River Challenge from many conservation efforts is that Indigenous leadership is not an afterthought; it is the foundation. The campaign is built on a formal partnership between Fraser Riverkeeper and the Indigenous Stewardship Fund (ISF), led by Jordan Point, former Executive Director of the First Nations Fisheries Council. The primary mechanisms for achieving lasting protection are Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), Indigenous guardian programs, and First Nations-led governance & stewardship structures that have been developing across the rivershed for more than a decade.

This model aligns with Canada's commitments under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and gives practical expression to reconciliation through on-the-ground stewardship.

What the Fraser River Challenge Asks of Us

The campaign is building public momentum through the Fraser Rivershed Declaration — a growing list of signatories supporting the 30x30 protection goal. For Burke Mountain Naturalists, there are several ways to get involved: sign the declaration at fraseriverkeeper.ca, follow and share the expedition as it unfolds this August, and talk about the Fraser with your networks. Naturalist clubs have always understood that the species we love exist within systems — the Fraser River Challenge is asking us to protect the system itself.

For more information, visit fraseriverkeeper.ca.



17.6%. That's what protection looks like when you map every park, ecological reserve, conservation land, and regional greenspace across 21 million hectares of the Fraser Rivershed. It's meaningful progress — and it makes the distance to 30% by 2030 visible in a way that numbers alone can't. (Image credit: Fraser Riverkeeper)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Invasive Plant Removal at Como Lake Park

Wed May 6, 9 am – noon

This event is hosted by the City of Coquitlam with BMN volunteers. The goal is to tackle invasive plant species in the North Restoration Area. Meet at the north end of Como Lake Park, 700 Gatenbury in Coquitlam, on tin grassy area west of the washrooms. Look for the City of Coquitlam tent and trucks. They will provide some gloves, clippers, loppers, shovels and rakes, but feel free to bring your own favourite tools if you wish. Also bring water and wear your old work clothes as it may be muddy.

Stay for the whole three hours or just a part. Every effort is appreciated as we try to make room for the planting of native plant species.

Please email [Kathy Leko at kleko@telus.net](mailto:Kathy.Leko@telus.net) if you plan on helping out or for more information.

BMN EVENING NATURE HIKE: Pinnacle Creek Ravine

Thurs May 7, 6 pm – 8 pm

This loop trip will travel through a forested area in Coquitlam on narrow less-traveled trails that might be overgrown. Time will be taken to enjoy the spring vegetation popping up, but this is a hike and not a walk. These trails should not be underestimated, as they are steep and hands are sometimes needed. This ravine has some of the largest Douglas fir trees in the Harbour Chines area. Roundtrip distance is 3 km with a cumulative elevation gain of 150 m.

Please contact Ian (604-939-4039 or imcart@telus.net) if you are planning to attend or for more information.

FREE 'CLIMATE WALK': at Port Moody's Shoreline Park

Sat May 9, 11 am

Following the success of their first Climate Walk, Neighbours United is hosting a second walk. This time they will meet at Rocky Point in Port Moody for a walk along the Shoreline Trail, some good conversation, and if desired, some ice cream afterwards. This is a relaxed chance to get outside, connect with others, and chat about local climate, environmental, and community issues.

Meet in front of Rocky Point Ice Cream. Do the Shoreline Trail together and chat as we walk.

Sign up here. <https://form-can.keela.co/may-9th-climate-walk>

BMN MAY MEETING (in person): "Wildlife Photography around the Lower Mainland"

Presented by Bryan Ness

Tues May 12, 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Bryan Ness is best known as a local historian with the Port Coquitlam Heritage Society. But Bryan is also a superb nature photographer. At our May meeting, he will show some of his spectacular photos of local wildlife and scenery. Following the presentation, the audience is welcome to share their knowledge and encounters with the various species found around our area.

Held at Como Lake United Church, 535 Marmont St, Coquitlam

BMN Club Meeting (in person)

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7:30pm – 9:00pm

**Como Lake United Church
535 Marmont St., Coquitlam**

IGA Thank You!

By Edie Kernighan

During April, IGA Parkway showcased BMN by creating awareness and collecting donations for our club. On Earth Day, April 22nd, BMN volunteers spent the day at IGA to share information about our purpose and activities with shoppers. We are grateful to the owners, Chris and Fin, and the IGA staff for supporting BMN, to the many shoppers who donated and chatted with us, and to our volunteers.

Check out the store – great selection, friendly staff, and also many plants to choose from for your gardens.



Sign of Appreciation. Photo: Chris Thomson



BMN Volunteers at IGA Parkway. Photo: Chris Thomson



Customers learning more about the work of BMN! Photo: Chris Thomson

'BE BEAR AWARE' FREE INFORMATION SESSION

Wed May 20, 6 pm - 8:30 pm

The City of Port Coquitlam is hosting an info session on bear behaviours, how to properly manage your attractants and what to do if you encounter a bear. Other sessions will be run in June and September.

Held in the Gathering Place, #200 - 2253 Leigh Square, Port Coquitlam.

Free, but registration is required.

BMN NATURE HIKE: East Harbour Chines

Thurs May 21, 6 pm – 8:30 pm

This loop trip will travel through a forested area in Coquitlam and Port Moody on narrow less traveled trails that might be overgrown. Time will be taken to enjoy the spring vegetation popping up, but this is a hike and not a walk. These trails should not be underestimated as they are steep and hands are sometimes needed. The tranquil sound of Williams and Dallas Creeks can be heard along the way. Roundtrip distance is 7 km with a cumulative elevation gain of 250 m.

Please contact Ian (604.939.4039 or imcart@telus.net) if you are planning to attend or for more info.

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Invasive Plant Removal at Como Lake Park

Sat May 23, 9 am – noon

See May 6th event listing

Please email [Kathy Leko at kleko@telus.net](mailto:KathyLeko@kleko@telus.net) if you plan on helping out or for more info.

FREE GUIDED TOUR OF THE TREES on the səmiq̓'ə?elə/Riverview Lands in Coquitlam

Sun May 24, 1 pm – 3 pm

Join the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society (RHCS) for a tree tour. These are family-friendly walks guided by a certified arborist who will provide information on the trees and their significance. Dogs must be on-leash. No advance registration is required.

This is the 34th year that RHCS has offered these walks that educate residents of all ages about the world-class collection of rare trees planted on the səmiq̓'ə?elə site. Please join the tour to show your support for preserving the priceless natural heritage of the səmiq̓'ə?elə/Riverview Lands.

Meet in the Serenity Garden down the slope from the Henry Esson Young (HEY) Building, which is roughly in the middle of the səmiq̓'ə?elə /Riverview Lands in Coquitlam. Watch for Tree Tour direction signs when you enter the site. Goes rain or shine.

For further information or for dates of other tours, call 604.290.9910 or see <https://rhcs.org/>.

BMN HIKE: Eagle Bluffs and Vancouver Lookout

Sat May 30 Time TBA

Fabulous views can be seen from this area. This is not an easy hike, so you'll need to be in shape. The leaders are only allowing four other experienced hikers to join them. Meeting time and location will be supplied closer to the date. Roundtrip distance is 8.3 km with an elevation gain of 720 m.

Please contact Rich (scrambler27@fastmail.com or 778.999.8170) or Janet (janetrozanski@gmail.com or 604.761.1525) if you plan to attend or for more info.

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Water Quality Monitoring Projects

Sun May 31, 9 am – 10 am

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 and Evelyn Thomson at ecco@telus.net

BMN WALK: Sheep Paddock Trail

Mon June 1, 6 pm – 9 pm

Come out and enjoy an evening walk while taking in the flora and fauna the area has to offer. Information will be shared about the history of the trail. Roundtrip distance is 6 km with minimal elevation change.

Please contact Ian (604.939.4039) or (imcart@telus.net) if you are planning on attending or for more info.

BMN JUNE MEETING (OUTDOORS): Nature Walk around Como Lake **Tues June 9, 7:30 pm – 9 pm**

Come out and enjoy an evening stroll around the lake, while taking in the flora and fauna. Information and history will be shared about the lake. This a great time to interact with fellow members and catch up on what people have been up to.

Meet in the north parking lot near the bathrooms at 700 Gatensbury Street.

Please contact Ian (604.939.4039) or (imcart@telus.net) for more info.

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

Tales from the “Trail” – BMN Members Go Back to School

Date of Walk: April 10, 2026

By John Saremba

On the afternoon of April 10th, five BMN members went “back to school” at the BCIT Burnaby Campus Council Chambers. Judy Taylor-Akinson, Jim Atkinson, Chris and Evelyn Thomson and I had the pleasure of watching several applied research project presentations by students in the BCIT Ecological Restoration BSc Project.

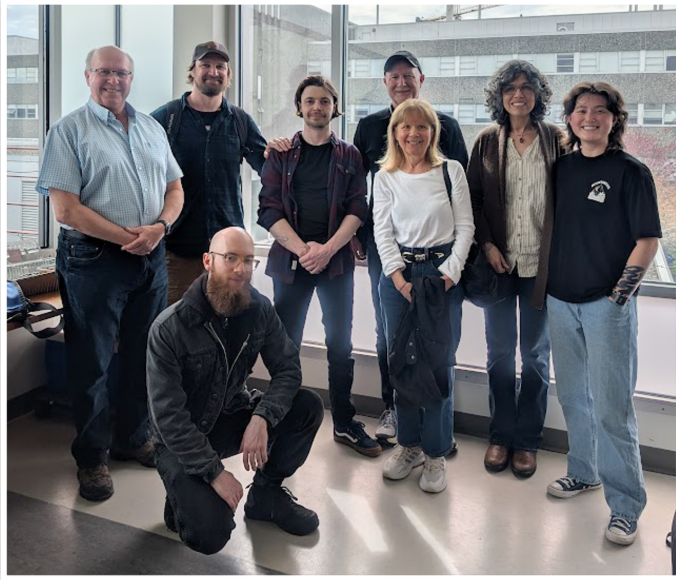
As the head of the Ecological Restoration Program, Dr. Eric Anderson invited sponsors to attend the student presentations. Two of the presentations were of particular interest in that BMN members had once again sponsored these applied research projects, which were conducted in the final year of this BSc program.

During this past academic year, the City of Port Moody Environment and Parks department as well as Judy, Jim and I were involved in the Pigeon Cove Estuarine Interface Resiliency Restoration Plan: Vegetation Management and Stream Health Assessment. This capstone project was conducted by the student team of Levi Chapman, Christian Cruz, and Mikyla Steed-Wiercinski with Shannon Guichon as their BCIT faculty supervisor.

This applied research project involved development of an ecological restoration plan along a section of the Shoreline Trail at Burrard Inlet in

Port Moody. The original scope of this project was to conduct a bio-inventory of an area surrounding the newly constructed elevated boardwalk along the Shoreline Trail. This study was to include vegetation and wildlife inventories with particular attention to invasive plan species and hydrological monitoring of Suterbrook Creek and Pigeon Creek. A restoration plan was created through this study in support of the City of Port Moody's future wildlife and vegetation control management considerations.

The City of Coquitlam Urban Forests and Parks departments as well as Evelyn, Chris and I sponsored a second BCIT project, i.e., a Restoration Plan for Native Amphibian Conservation in Mundy Park. This research project was conducted by the student team of Caspian Burns, Jack Dandy, Hannah Deck, and Steven Henderson with Anayansi Cohen-Fernandez as the BCIT faculty supervisor.



BCIT Native Amphibian Project Team and BMN Sponsors. Photo: Anayansi Cohen-Fernandez

This project focused on native amphibian (e.g., Pacific Chorus frogs) habitat enhancement and public engagement at a shallow pond surrounded by the Disc golf course at the western side of the Mundy Park. The student team proposed such enhancement through measures such as invasive plant removal, native vegetation planting, physical habitat protection through fencing, interpretive signage and collaboration with community stewardship programs and key stakeholders.

In 2020, BMN members started supporting student projects in various BCIT departments and programs, including the Master's and BSc Ecological Programs at Simon Fraser University and BCIT and the Fish, Wildlife and Recreation Diploma Program. This support comprised BMN members initially submitting a proposal for a research project to these programs. The student teams then reviewed and selected projects of interest from those submitted by BMN and other proponents. When a proposal was accepted, the next step would be for BCIT faculty and the respective student teams to seek approval from the appropriate jurisdiction to conduct the research study.

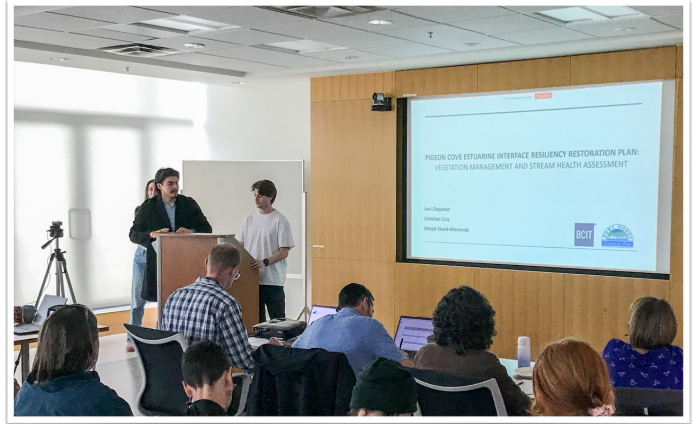
Typically, this would involve contacting a municipality or the regional district for permission to access the proposed study site. Then at the start of the project one of the key steps was the initial meeting between the sponsors, the student study team and the faculty supervisor. During such a meeting, discussions revolved around the key contacts for the project, initial sources of background information, and preliminary consideration of the scope and focus of the project. In many cases, an initial field meeting was arranged between

representatives from the sponsors and the student team members. This turned out to be an excellent way for the groups to begin collaboration on the proposed study with refinement of the project scope and objectives.

The student team would then begin making arrangements for the field work as well as finalize submission of any required permit forms, which included a safety plan. The field work was usually carried out during October to late February. The students then worked on preparing a draft research report and restoration plan. On some of the projects, the students provided their sponsors with a draft copy of their report for review comments and feedback. The projects culminated with a formal 30-minute presentation in mid-April, which sponsors were welcome to attend.



Native amphibian project student presentation. Photo: John Saremba



Pigeon Cove project student presentation. Photo: John Saremba

After the presentations, the students completed their final reports, which were due by the end of April. The involvement of sponsors in such applied research projects offers a range of benefits, such as:

- the students had the opportunity to conduct research on real world conservation issues
- the student research often involved the use of scientific grade equipment, which provided data that could be shared with municipal and regional agencies
- the students could contact and interact with environmental agencies and departments that may represent potential future employers
- nature clubs like BMN could share community science information and background details about the history, flora and fauna at student project study areas. In BMN's case this involved offering information about sites at Como Lake Park, Mundy Park, Léxətəm Regional Park (formerly Colony Farm), Rocky Point Park, Blakeburn Lagoons Park, and Deboville Slough.

- municipal and regional district departments had the chance to receive excellent and comprehensive bio-inventory studies and ecological restoration plans

In sponsoring a number of these applied research projects, we found the experience interacting with the students to be very positive. Moreover, the presentations and research project reports were excellent and most informative. But perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of supporting these projects was the opportunity to interact with very enthusiastic and energetic students. It was very gratifying to see their career progression in the field of nature conservation and ecological restoration.

The Fingerling Festival

By Edie Kernighan

The Fingerling Festival was a fun way to spend a perfect sunny day. The hatchery was very busy and there were many environmentalists' tables to browse.

Quite a few volunteers came to help set up, assist children with completing fish bookmarks and cherry blossom trees, and chat with passers-by about our organizations, BMN and the Wondrous Tree Fellowship.

Special thanks to Beverly and Jack Roest for their creative ideas and help with preparing the bookmarks for kids to decorate. Also, thanks to Ian, Helen, Elaine and Adrienne for attaching fins and tails and guiding the kids with their artwork.

Apparently, I cannot figure out which way the fins go, and so was excused from this task.

Nancy, James, Sandy and Anne helped children create cherry trees while Rod, Catherine, Brian, Mahasti, and Edie chatted with parents. I am not sure if the "big kids" or the little kids enjoyed crafting the most!



Learning about Nature. Photo: Mahasti and Edie



Learning about the Importance of Trees. Photo: Mahasti and Edie



Making Bookmarks. Photo: Mahasti and Edie



Creating Cherry Trees. Photo: Mahasti and Edie

Rooted in Gratitude!

We are grateful to all who came out to our April meeting to learn about the "Ten Must-Have's for Urban Forest Management", presented by Nancy Furness and James Bobick, and to our Coquitlam community members who took the time to reach out to the City of Coquitlam to voice their own concerns for the city's tree canopy and old growth. Our voices can make an immediate difference in policy, and a long-term difference for our environment. Updates to follow as City Council meets on this important matter.



Canopy, Blue Mountain Park. Photo: M. Andersen

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.

Coquitlam:

- Christine Tam & Andrew Winters (27 April 2026)

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, May 30, 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

President: Ian McArthur, imcart@telus.net (604.939.4039) Phil

Vice President: Brian Wormald, brian@wormald-online.com (604.537.3717)

Treasurer: Edie Kernighan, ekernighan@gmail.com (604.937.0958)

Past President: Phillip Buchan, pbuchan@mac.com (604.329.5537)

Recording Secretary: Vacant

Members-at-Large: Laura Dupont (lauradupont@shaw.ca), Elaine Golds (elaine.golds@gmail.com), Kathy Leko (kleko@telus.net), Victoria Otton (svotton@gmail.com), Jeff Rudd (rudd@sfu.ca), Helen Howes (helenhowes@shaw.ca), Sebastian Thomas (sebastian.thomas02@gmail.com)

Membership Secretary: Brian Wormald, brian@wormald-online.com (604.537.3717)

BC Nature Club Representative:

Victoria Otton, svotton@gmail.com (604.937.5379)

Education and Conservation Committee:

burkemtnnats@gmail.com

Nature and Feeder Watch:

Liz Thunstrom, elizabeththunstrom@telus.net (604.939.9571)

BMN-Friends of DeBoville Slough Committee:

2fodbs.bmn@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Michelle Andersen, 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](#).