



BURKE MOUNTAIN NATURALISTS

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

Local Conservation Effort Raises Awareness of the Endangered Oregon Forestsnail at Łéxətem Regional Park, Coquitlam

by Jane Thomsing

The Kwikwetlem First Nation and the Lower Coquitlam River Nature Association (formerly called the Colony Farm Park Association) are leading efforts to educate the public about the endangered Oregon Forestsnail and the important role it plays in maintaining healthy ecosystems. It is hoped that through public outreach and education, visitors to Łéxətem Regional Park will be inspired to appreciate this often-overlooked species and help protect its habitat.

The Oregon Forestsnail is one of British Columbia's rarest land snails. A large number of the snails live at Łéxətem Regional Park, where they contribute to the natural recycling of nutrients by feeding on decaying plant material and organic debris. In doing so, the species helps enrich soils, supports healthy ecosystems, and plays an important role in the food web for birds, mammals, amphibians, and other wildlife.

The Kwikwetlem First Nation has been actively studying the Oregon Forestsnail within Łéxətem since 2022. Through population monitoring, Kwikwetlem researchers have documented areas of important Oregon Forestsnail habitat and gathered information on the species' abundance, distribution, movement, size, and habitat use. This work supports the Nation's broader stewardship efforts and their commitment to protecting, enhancing, and restoring habitat for Oregon Forestsnail and other species that live within their Traditional Territory.

"I don't think many people using these trails realize just how densely populated some areas are with the Oregon Forestsnail. Through our study, we found as many as 23 snails within a single square metre, often concentrated beneath leaves and other cover along trail edges.

This not only highlights how unique and important Łéxətem is for the species, but also how vulnerable the snails can be to disturbance. Because they frequently occur in places where they are easily harmed and difficult to see, extra care along the trails is especially important."

– Cassandra Harper, Environmental Lead, Kwikwetlem First Nation

"Many people walk through the park without realizing these remarkable creatures are living right on the trails", said Jane Thomsing of the Lower Coquitlam River Nature Association. "The Oregon Forestsnail is a small but essential part of our natural

environment. By learning about it and respecting its habitat, everyone can contribute to its survival."

As more people enjoy the trails at Łéxətem Regional Park, it is increasingly important for walkers, runners, and cyclists to be mindful of Oregon Forestsnail habitat. These snails are often active on or near trails, especially during damp conditions, making them vulnerable to being accidentally

crushed underfoot or beneath bicycle tires. Taking simple precautions, such as staying alert, slowing down in sensitive areas, remaining on designated trails, and dismounting bicycles can make a meaningful difference. Every individual snail plays a role in the survival of this endangered species and protecting them is a shared responsibility that helps preserve the biodiversity and ecological health of our local ecosystems.



Walkers, runners and cyclists can inadvertently crush Oregon Forestsnails. This is one of the main human-caused reasons for snail mortality at Łéxətem Regional Park. Photo: Jane Thomsing

BMN September Meeting (via Zoom) "Members Night: Our Summer Adventures"

Tues Sept 8, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

BMN October Meeting (In person) "The Oregon Forestsnail" presented by Cassandra Harper

Tues Oct 13, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

**See Announcements for detail information*

Public education is a critical part of conservation. By increasing awareness of the Oregon Forestsnail and its ecological importance, the Lower Coquitlam River Nature Association hopes to foster greater stewardship of local parks and natural areas for future generations.

A Turtle's Life on the Line

Story by Sharie Ford, Donna Cranston, Janet Blair and Anne Carson

Written by Michelle Andersen

A summer's day stroll turned into a complicated rescue for some close Burke Mountain Naturalists/Como Lake United Church friends, when Sharie Ford, Janet Blair, Donna Cranston and Anne Carson happened upon what looked to be a struggling turtle in Como Lake.



Turtle tangled in fishing line at Como Lake Park. Photo: Sharie Ford

On closer inspection the turtle seemed to be tangled in some fishing line. Our new Como Lake Search and Rescue team found the largest stick they could, steadied Donna in a people chain held on by her shirt, and she, in much faith in her team, leaned as far out as she could with the large stick in an attempt to free the poor tangled turtle. What a sight this all must have been.

Our SAR Team was soon joined by someone with turtle experience who assisted in detangling the lines so that Turtle could be



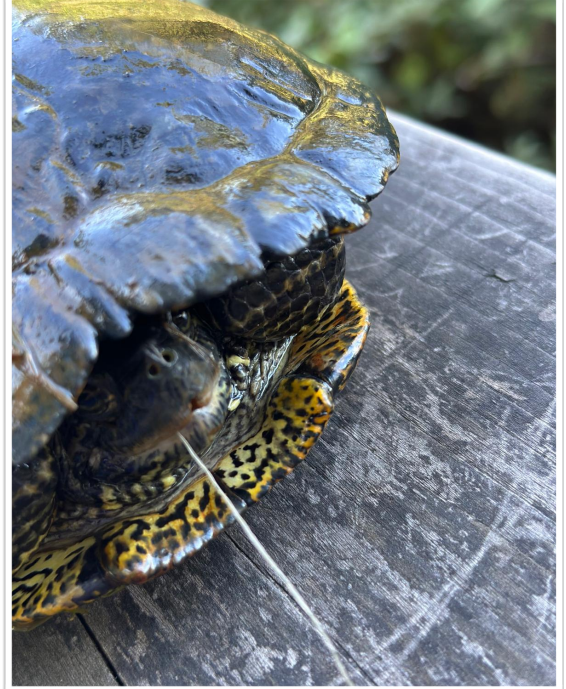
A large stick and the might of friends. Photo: Sharie Ford



Teaming up for Search and Rescue. Photo: Sharie Ford

freed. The whole rescue took a very long time due to the sheer amount of discarded fishing line in that area. Once freed, the team knew they needed to get Turtle further medical care as the fishing hook was still in the Turtle's mouth. Calling [Wildlife Rescue Association of BC](#) for advice, the SAR Team was told to bring the turtle in, but was advised that if the turtle was a painted turtle, native to BC, it would be given treatment and returned to Como Lake Park. Conversely, if the turtle was an invasive species, like a Yellow Slider, it would have to be euthanized.

Our Search and Rescue team knew that they had no choice but to take the turtle to Wildlife Rescue for its best chance – but from that point on, it would be a Schrödinger's Turtle. The team, with heavy hearts, decided they did not want to know what type of turtle they had rescued, but rather chose to hope, that it lived, returning to spend its days in Como Lake.



A turtle named Schrödinger. Photo: Sharie Ford

Following the experience, the team contacted City of Coquitlam to report the state of the lake and jumbled nests of fishing line that tainted the delicate ecosystem of the painted turtles' habitat. While the City works to protect and maintain our parks and natural areas, each of us also has a responsibility to protect the wildlife and ecosystems we live with. Leave our parks and conservation areas better than you found them and leave our animals safe and protected. The fate of our Schrödinger's Turtle remains unknown, but we do know this: a garbage bear is a dead bear, and wildlife, salmon and marine life tangled in discarded fishing line and plastics can suffer the same fate. These deaths are preventable. Leave no trace, AND PLEASE LEAVE NO INVASIVE PET TURTLES!

Welcome to New Members

By Brian Wormald (Membership)

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 Coquitlam

- Owen O'Riordan (2 July 2026)
- Karol Cybula and Samantha Pyke (12 July 2026)

BMN Partners with City of Coquitlam to Beautify Como Lake Park

By Edie Kernighan

Como Lake Park is a popular well used park in our community. For several years, BMN has partnered with the City of Coquitlam's Bad Seed Program to remove a variety of invasive plants to maintain the park and reestablish native growth. Unchecked growth of invasive plants such as ivy, blackberry, yellow flag iris, holly, and others choke out native plants and adversely affect the nesting areas for local birds.



BMN at work! Photo: Edie Kernighan

On August 22nd, BMN members resumed the clean up of Como Lake Park in partnership with the City of Coquitlam and several young volunteers to remove mostly ivy and blackberry. With many hands at work and cooler weather, we were able to clear much of the area on the north side of the lake. There is still much to be done! With additional volunteers, we can make Como Lake Park a showcase for healthy, native plants. This work is not only beneficial, but, believe it or not, everyone has fun. You meet new people, chatter, get exercise, and enjoy snacks provided by the city. Please consider coming out for a future event. Together, we make a difference!



BMN Volunteers on site to tackle invasive plant species. Photo: Edie Kernighan

Thank you, Kathy, for once again organizing this worthwhile event to maintain our beautiful local park.



Invasive Weed – possible hawkweed.
Photo: Edie Kernighan



End of day: a truckload full and a job well done! Photo: Edie Kernighan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BMN CLUB MEETING (via Zoom):

'Members Night: Our Summer Adventures'

Tues Sept 8, 7:30pm – 9pm

What better time to hold a BMN Members Night than at our September meeting? We're all fresh from a summer of exploring nature on balconies, gardens, forests, and water. Join the Zoom meeting and see what wonders have been discovered.

If you have sighting(s) to share, please email BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com by Sunday Sept 6th. Include a bit about your topic. If you need some assistance with presenting via Zoom, there is help available.

The Zoom link will be emailed in the days prior to Sept 8th.

GUIDED TOUR OF THE LOWER COQUITLAM RIVER WATERSHED:

Fri Sept 11, 9am – 5pm

Explore the Lower Coquitlam Watershed on this guided tour, stopping at key sites to learn about fish and wildlife habitat, water quality monitoring, flood infrastructure and watershed management.

Meet at Town Centre Park, 1299 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam

Tour fee: \$5, or free for members.

Register here.

For more info, contact coordinator@coquitlamriverwatershed.ca.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Help shape the future of Burnaby Lake Regional Park

Survey is open until Fri Sept 11

Metro Vancouver and the City of Burnaby are developing a 20-year management plan for Burnaby Lake Regional Park and are seeking public input.

The draft plan outlines priorities for protecting natural areas, enhancing amenities, and balancing the needs of all park users for decades to come. Your feedback will help shape the management plan.

Review the draft management plan.

Complete the online survey (open until September 11, 2026)

<https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-parks/burnaby-lake-regional-park-management-plan>

FREE GUIDED TOUR

of the Trees on the səmɪq̓ʷəʔelə/Riverview Lands in Coquitlam

Sun Sept 13, 1pm – 3pm

Enjoy learning about some of the magnificent trees on the Riverview Lands on this walking tour, hosted by the Riverview Horticultural Centre (RHCS). 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. Just show up.

This is the 34th year that RHCS has offered these walks that educate residents about the world-class collection of rare trees planted on the səmɪq̓ʷəʔelə site.

Please join the tour to show your support for preserving the priceless natural heritage of the səmɪq̓ʷəʔelə/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 səmɪq̓ʷəʔelə/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 www.rhcs.org.

HELP CELEBRATE

50 Years of Mossom Creek Hatchery

Sat Sept 19, 6pm – 10pm

2026 marks 50 years of salmon enhancement and environmental stewardship for Mossom Creek Hatchery & Education Centre!

First started by teachers Rod MacVicar and Ruth Foster along with dozens of hard-working high-school volunteers, the Mossom Creek Hatchery has grown into a significant environmental facility involved in salmon enhancement, environmental education, and scientific research.

Light refreshments will be served during a “mocktail hour”; followed by a slideshow commemorating 50 incredible years.

Port Moody Galleria and Inlet Theatre, 100 Newport Dr, Port Moody

Tickets are \$25 each and are going fast.

BURKE MOUNTAIN CLEANUP DAY:

Sat Sept 19, 10am – 1pm

This is a community-led initiative to clean up litter from 12 parks and 4 trail networks in the developed area on Burke Mountain. It is a family-friendly event, open to all ages and abilities.

Volunteer hours, snacks and prizes are provided, as is all the cleaning gear.

The City of Coquitlam will take the garbage away for proper disposal.

Meet at Sheffield Park, 3495 Chandler St, Coquitlam

Sponsored by Boro and Beyond Media.

For more info, please email Jeff at boroandbeyond@gmail.com.

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

Tri-Cities Volunteer Fair

Sat Sept 26, 10am – 2pm

Community Volunteer Connections is a local non-profit group that runs annual Volunteer Fairs to introduce Tri-Cities' groups to local residents wanting to volunteer.

BMN will have a display table at this year's Volunteer Fair, with information on our club and how our volunteers participate in the community. We hope this is an opportunity to attract some youthful and active members!

If you are interested in helping to staff the BMN table, please contact Edie Kernighan (ekernighan@gmail.com or 604-839-9823).

Held at PoCo Community Centre (Mabbett Hall), 2150 Wilson Ave, Port Coquitlam

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Water Quality Monitoring Projects

Sun Sept 27, 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 CLUB MEETING (in person):

'The Oregon Forestsnail' presented by Cassandra Harper

Tues Oct 13, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

We live in the northern-most range of the Oregon Forestsnail, and Ł́éxətəm/Colony Farm Regional Park is THE place in BC to see these rare and endangered molluscs. This species is listed as endangered both federally and provincially, and portions of Ł́éxətəm are managed to protect their habitat. But problems remain.

Cassandra Harper, project leader of the Kwikwetlem First Nation Environmental Stewardship Group will describe some of the work done (in association with volunteers from the Lower Coquitlam River Nature Association) to learn more about protecting Ł́éxətəm's population of Oregon Forestsnails and to provide education to park-goers on how they can help.

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

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

Tales from the Trail – Bunting on the Brambles, Bunting on the Trail Date of Walk: June 21, 2026

By John Saremba

The hot weather expected for this bird survey did not diminish the enthusiasm of our participants, in large part due to this being an excellent time of the year for birding. With some of the adult birds now looking after their fledglings, it was hoped that birds would be somewhat more out in the open. Highlights from this survey are noted as follows.

- We were really pleased to start the survey with 15 bird species observed at Station 1. In fact, participants were somewhat reluctant to move along to the next Station with all the bird sightings of note. These notable sightings included the first of a number of Lazuli buntings seen out in the open with another seen partially hidden down in the grasses, a barn swallow, a pair of Savannah sparrows, and several American goldfinches.



Birders enjoying watching birds near Station.
Photo: John Saremba



Brightly colored male Lazuli bunting. Photo: John Saremba



Lazuli bunting among the grasses. Photo: John Saremba

- Reluctantly the group walked over to Station 2 but were soon rewarded with another delightful series of bird observations for totalling 13 species. The group quite appreciated watching a female American goldfinch pulling out seeds from a thistle plant, which seemed to be getting ready to bloom much earlier than usual. Other observations at this station included a number of



American goldfinch feasting on a thistle plant. Photo: John Saremba

Common yellowthroat warblers, a Willow flycatcher, a Black-header grosbeak, a Northern rough-winged swallow, Barn swallows, Tree swallows, and the sound of a nearby Ring-necked pheasant.

- On route to Station 3, another male Lazuli bunting made a brief appearance on top of a large Himalayan blackberry thicket before flying off to perch in a nearby tall tree.

- Despite the lack of water in the wetland area at Station 3, we had one of our highest species counts of the year here with 18 species observed (i.e., seen and/or heard). One of the really interesting observations included Cedar waxwings seen bringing materials to build a nest at the base of a large tree and shrubs immediately adjacent to the service road. We happened to get an excellent view of a male Downy woodpecker as it quietly foraged at the base of a large tree near our group. Both a Rufous and Anna's hummingbird zoomed by our group with four Savannah sparrows also making their presence known with their quiet, high-pitched short songs.



Cedar waxwing gathering nesting material. Photo: John Saremba



More nest gathering material activity. Photo: John Saremba



Male Downy woodpecker searching for food. Photo: John Saremba

- Station 4 (i.e., adjacent to the Labyrinth) offered some new bird observations for today's outing including the distinctive sounds of two Bewick's wrens, a pair of Bald eagles, a Swainson's thrush, and a Wilson's warbler. By the way, on other recent nature walks elsewhere, Christina and I have heard what we thought were Wilson's warblers but with very subtle differences in their song. Turns out that those songs were produced by Northern Yellow Warblers, which have a similar song to that of the Wilson's.
- Much like many of our past surveys, we saw quite a few Song sparrows, which have the following identification characteristics:



Song sparrow with a meal. Photo: John Saremba

They are medium-sized and fairly bulky sparrows. For a sparrow species, they have a short and stout brown bill with a fairly rounded head, which is an attractive mix of warm red-brown and slaty gray. Their tail is long and rounded and have broad wings all of which are reddish-brown. Song sparrows are streaky and brown with thick streaks on a white chest and flanks. The streaks on their chest often run together into a central blotch.

- On route to and at Station 5 our group saw a number of adult and juvenile swallows. Now at this time of the year, it can be rather challenging to identify different swallow species as the juveniles have not developed their adult coloration. However, juveniles often remain perched on utility lines along the road in the hopes of still getting a meal from their parents. Much like other Stations on our

route, we also heard a number of the short warning calls from Common Yellowthroats hidden in the tall grasses.

- Our group did identify a number of adult swallow species as they flew by rather close by, including Violet-green, Tree, Barn, Northern rough-winged and even a Cliff swallow.



Juvenile swallow. Photo: John Saremba

- Bird observations at Station 6 included several more Common yellowthroats, a Black-head grosbeak singing in the distance, a pair of Cedar waxwings, and an Anna's hummingbird. An adult Barn swallow happened to perch briefly by a juvenile swallow .



Juvenile swallow with Barn swallow on the right. Photo: John Saremba

- At Station 7, another male Lazuli bunting was seen while perched on the utility line. We then walked north on the trail to see if we could spot any activity on the Red-tailed hawk nest at the transmission tower. Unfortunately, without a scope we could not get a clear view of the nest, but it did appear to be empty, which meant that the juvenile hawks may have fledged and left the nest.
- On route back to the Community Gardens parking lot, we had several other interesting observations, including an ant "highway" created by many ants crossing back and forth on the trail in the same location, which created a shallow trough. A young Coyote was spotted moving away from us along the trail as we headed back to the Community Garden parking lot.



Young coyote on the trail. Photo: John Saremba

And so, we completed another very satisfying morning on the trail.

DEADLINE for the next BMN Newsletter
Wednesday, September 23, 2026
Send articles to: bmnnewsletter@gmail.com

Burke Mountain Naturalists Membership (JANUARY TO DECEMBER)

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

Our activities include:

☐ \$33 for an individual ☐ \$40 for a Family Membership

☐ **NEW!** Post-Secondary Student Membership — \$10

- 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: _____

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)

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](#).