

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

BOW VALLEY NATURALISTS

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Save the date! BVN's 2018 evening speaker series resumes on October 23, 2018. Admission is free. Donations at the door. Mark your calendar and join us for a new season of conversations and natural history presentations.

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LET THEM KNOW YOUR MIND...

Contact information for letting politicians, governments and land managers know what you're thinking. Give credit where credit is due and remind them that they work for you.



This vagrant Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) was spotted Canmore on September 18, 2018. Scroll down for a story about another cross country traveler documented by MAPS program. *Photo: Cliff Hansen.*

BOWVALLEYNATURALISTS.ORG

1967 - 2018

Ecosystem Protection And Education

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Our October to April program of free presentations occurs on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Banff Seniors Centre starting at 7:30 pm. Watch the “[Events](#)” tab on the BVN website for the beautiful posters advertising these special social and informative evenings commencing on October 23. Admission is free. Donations at the door. Mark your calendar and join us for a new season of natural history presentations.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23

Putting Beavers to Work for Watershed Resiliency and Restoration.

Holly Kinas, Miistakis Institute.

Beavers, Canada's national animal, provide many valuable ecosystem services including storage of water during droughts and flooding, creation of habitat for a variety of species, and improvement of water quality. These benefits allow for the increased watershed resiliency and restoration across the landscape. Land owners can come into conflict with beavers that can cause damage by flooding roads, plugging culverts or taking down prized trees. This can lead to the removal of beavers from the ecosystem.

This project is a partnership between the Miistakis Institute and Cows and Fish - Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society and aims to increase the coexistence of humans and beavers. By engaging with local landowners and land managers we strive to decrease conflict with beavers, foster social tolerance, and heighten understanding of the benefits that beavers provide us and the ecosystem as a whole.

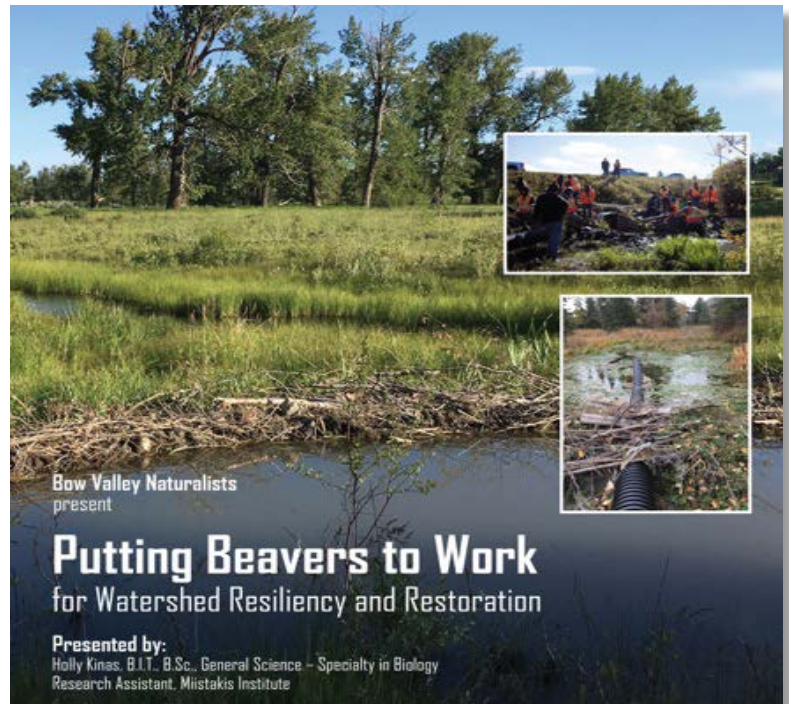
Holly has been a Research Assistant with the Miistakis Institute since 2016. Her work at Miistakis focuses on providing research support across a variety of research topics including human wildlife coexistence, citizen science for conservation, transportation ecology, municipalities and conservation, conservation planning and policy, and private land conservation.

Tuesday, November 27

We look forward to a talk from Bill Snow of the Stoney Nakoda First Nation on their traditional knowledge grizzly bear study in Kananaskis Country.

Saturday, December 15th

The 2018 Banff-Canmore Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 15th. Join us for some outdoor sharing and afterwards some tall tales and good potluck eats. Watch the BVN website and regular updates for more details.



NEWS AND ISSUES

Farewell Dorothy Carleton (1919 - 2018)

Heather Dempsey

Dorothy Carleton was a local Banff legend. She came to Canada as a war bride, married Canadian soldier Ed Carleton who joined the Banff Warden Service after the war. She raised her three children in the backcountry, was an active volunteer and loved to sing. The local trio, The Wardens have even recorded a song about Dorothy called War Bride to Warden Bride.

No surprise that Dorothy also loved the outdoors. Bow Valley Naturalists are proud to claim her as one of our own, as she and Ed were long time BVN members and supporters. Dorothy continued to be a member after Ed died in 1994 up until she moved into Cascade House a few years ago. Mike McIvor remembers that they were on our very first bird count, and many after that. Dorothy's son Brian confirms that Dorothy knew her birds. Going through her diaries after she died this summer, he saw her bird lists that she compiled after every outing, especially to Vermilion Lakes.



We add our gratitude to the many who Dorothy touched and send out our condolences to her family and many friends. You can rest a spell any time at Dorothy's bench on Mountain Avenue, or next summer visit Ed Carleton's memorial bench overlooking Rainy Bay along the Sundance Canyon trail.

2026 OLYMPICS

Banff National Park is not being proposed as an event venue for the 2026 Winter Olympic Bid. If you would like follow the Olympic bid process, everyone is invited to a public information session regarding the Calgary 2026 Draft Hosting Concept to be held on Sunday, October 28, hosted by the Calgary 2026 committee. This information session is open to anyone who may be interested in the Olympic and Paralympic Bid. Please RSVP as there will be limited capacity. A downloadable copy of the draft hosting plan is also available.

ONGOING ISSUES

BVN's Board of Directors continue to be active on a variety of issues that have potential to impact Bow Valley ecosystems. Since our last newsletter, in addition to following developments on the Olympic Bid proposals we have also worked on:

- Further efforts to limit they fireworks display may impact wildlife.
- Commented on the draft guidelines for Sunshine Ski Area.
- On-going developments related Lake Louise ski area planning and environmental impacts.
- Thanked the provincial government for protecting the Smith Creek wildlife corridor.
- Followed developments relating to the Town of Banff's Environmental Management plan.
- Town of Canmore not be given special exemption from third party review of environmental impact statements for projects proposed by the Town.

We do what we can and can always use some help. If working on these or similar issues interest you please get in touch.

THE BEAR MINIMUM

BVN welcomes a new group in town! The Bear Minimum (TBM) is a community-based group that started in November last year. TBM is working together with the community and businesses in order to reduce single-use plastics in Banff National Park through a variety of exciting projects! This year TBM is looking to host a variety of workshops creating plastic alternatives such as tote bags, beeswax wraps, produce bags and other exciting items. They are also looking to start more discussions with the community in order to start the road to zero waste. Businesses across Banff are actively seeking alternatives in their workplace, with TBM looking to provide information and simple switches that businesses will be able to integrate with ease. This is such an exciting project that has been received extremely well across town, even appearing before the Town Council to discuss Banff's future in regards to single-use plastics and the Town of Banff's willingness to work together on a solution! Check them out on Facebook and Instagram to stay tuned for future events and workshops.



DO IT LIKE DISNEY

Way back in the day we would joke about Banff National Park and Banff townsite becoming a Disneyland-like atmosphere and getting as crowded as Niagara Falls. Well, it's not a joke anymore. It's here, and maybe it's not so funny if you aspire for national parks to be places of solitude where typical Canadians can reconnect (and can afford to reconnect) with nature as members of the "B" once secretly dreamed (See Bison and the "B" [below](#)).

Our local symbols of Canada's national park system are now becoming known as places to avoid due to crowding. There are more and more reports that backcountry campgrounds are getting crowded by illegal campers with no enforcement in sight. And how do we solve this problem? Someone has finally suggested we should do it like Disneyland. An editorial in the Calgary Herald on August 29th of this year suggests that "the idealism of well-intentioned conservationists has to be tempered with economic reality". Who should we take our advice from? The writer suggests it is time to "borrow practices used by popular attractions such as Disneyland."



These Varied Thrushes (*Ixoreus naevius*) look like they are hoping they are not still around for the Christmas Bird Count.

The mitigation of problems caused by unlimited growth of human use of Banff National Park, since it may be too late for solutions, will of necessity be complex and diverse. It is very likely we will now need to draw on the experience of manufactured places like Disneyland for part of the solution. But let's take a moment to remember what was left behind by dreams of "economic reality". Let's hope the conservation visions of The "B" will find their way back into the mix.

OF WILD THINGS

THE AMAZING SISKIN

Foreign Recapture of Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) at Ranger Creek MAPS Station. *Cyndi Smith*

The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) station at Ranger Creek has been operated by BVN since 1999. In that time we have captured 4,491 birds, of which 1,308 have been recaptures of birds banded at the site in previous years or earlier in the same year (or day). However, on 26 June 2016 we finally had a “foreign recapture” ... a bird banded elsewhere! On that day, bander-in-charge Ken Symington captured a male Pine Siskin (#2780-67607) that had been banded on 19 February 2016 at Long Point Bird Observatory in southern Ontario. The straight line distance between the two locations is approximately 2,850 kilometres in a northwesterly direction as indicated by the black line on the adjacent map. Of course, this would not likely represent the true path of movement, so the distance this bird travelled is likely much greater. He has not been recaptured since.

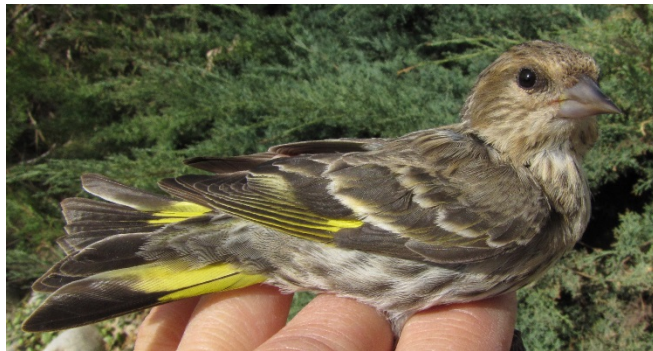
As their name suggests, Pine Siskins feed predominantly on conifer seeds, but also eat seeds of deciduous trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs, and insects. They are also frequent visitors to bird feeders. Pine Siskins are known as “irruptive winter finches” because of their erratic, continental scale movements, following the conifer seed crops year to year. As seed crops fail in their normal winter range, Pine Siskins may be found as far south as Florida and Mexico. From continental banding records it appears that birds encountered in south central and southeastern states came from, and returned to, the north-central portion of the continent, while birds encountered in the northeastern US and southeastern Canada came from, and returned to, western provinces and states (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2018, Yunick 1997).

References:

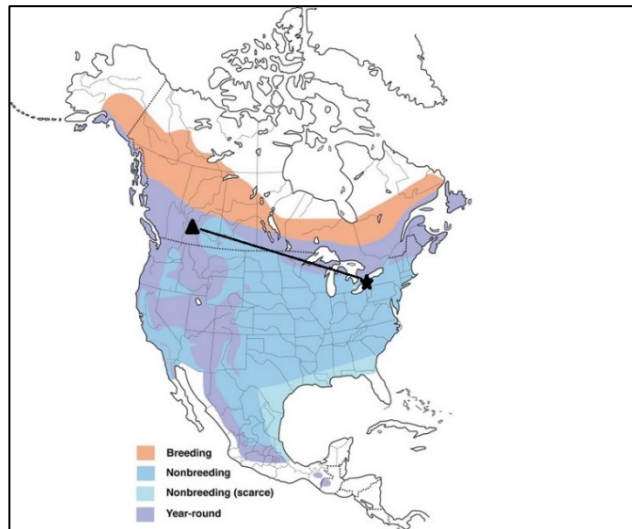
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2017. [All about birds: Pine Siskin](#).
Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2018. Project Feederwatch: [Tracking Pine Siskin movements](#).
Yunick, R. P. 1997. Geographical distribution of re-encountered Pine Siskins captured in upstate, eastern New York during the 1989-1990 irruption. *North American Bird Bander* 22(1):10-15.

ASPEN TREE LEAF MINER (*Phyllocnistis populiella*) *Blake Gordon*

No doubt you have noticed the silvery appearance of the trembling or quaking aspen leaves over the



Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*). *Cyndi Smith Photo*.



Pine Siskin Range Map. *Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2017*

past few years. This rarely causes tree mortality but does cause reduced growth. In very dry years or other severe stress the tree can die. The aspen tree serpentine leaf miner completes its life cycle in one year. The adult moths (5mm) overwinter in the bark crevices or in the forest floor duff. They emerge in the early spring just before the tree buds open. They feed on the nectar at the base of some of the leaf buds, mate and lay their eggs on the upper surface of the leaf and seldom on the lower surface. They usually deposit one to two eggs per leaf.



Aspen Leaf Miner. *Blake Gordon photo.*

Eggs hatch into larvae in about 10 to 14 days. The larvae chew through the bottom side of the egg and enter the leaf where they mine in the epidermis without damaging the upper or lower surface of the leaf. The larvae mine in a uniquely snake like pattern and go through four larvae stages in a two week period. Pupation occurs along a folded edge of the leaf. The adult moths emerge in July or early August.

During periods of a severe outbreak, complete stands of aspen can be defoliated by the leaf miner. The leaves take on a silvery look when viewed from afar. This effect was particularly striking along the Kootenay Parkway in Kootenay National Park this summer. While there are known predators of the leaf miner their populations are prone to weather conditions such as cold, wet weather. Natural control agents that would normally restore the balance of the insect population have proven ineffective with the leaf miner. There is no indication of when the current population outbreak will subside.

BOOK REVIEWS

BIG LONELY DOUG - Harley Rustad
Colleen Campbell

I am thrilled to find book about a topic that can sideline me, pull me into its pages to be lost for hours on end. Big Lonely Doug is new, published in 2018. The story is anchored by a noticeably large coastal Douglas Fir on Vancouver Island.

In the early pages, readers are introduced to a logging surveyor marking cut-blocks near Port Renfrew. He singles out trees to be left standing, and the narrative then unfolds in the tradition of chronicles by Andrew Nikiforuk and John Vaillant.

Rustad circles the woods with answers to questions you might never ever think to ask. The story moves smoothly through all the topics that complete one's understanding of the natural, economic and social conditions that make Big Lonely Doug an important tree, one to be revered.

The history of logging and our incapacity to change habits as information and conditions expand our understanding is presented without judgment. The reader becomes part of a jury that must try to assess the long-term importance of primal forests and the impact of industrial logging — probably in any habitat — especially in sensitive habitat. (Isn't all habitat sensitive, before we alter it?)

The book is a “page-turner”. It is very well-written, challenging because it alludes to all the greed and industrial speed with which we “harvest” everything. And it has the potential to make any reader very sad for the state of our own species and how we treat our “home.”

Harley Rustad, is an editor at Walrus Magazine and is scheduled to present during the book festival at the Banff Centre on November 1, 2018.

THE BISON AND THE “B” - Briony Penn, *CBC Ideas Podcast*
Heather Dempsey

“It was a simple file folder, enigmatically labelled “B”. But it was the key to learning how a small secret society of key scientists in the federal government in the 1920s, thwarted an ill-conceived plan to move Plains Bison into Wood Buffalo National Park because it would have mixed incompatible species. But the “Brotherhood” did much more than that. Author and naturalist Briony Penn tells the story of the B, and how over the decades they quietly shaped the environmental movement and how we think about nature...” *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ideas*.

Author Penn uncovered this story during her research on her latest book [The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart Cowan](#) published by Rocky Mountain Books, in 2016. It is available at the Banff Public Library and through the Marigold System. A review of that book is available in our [Winter 2016 newsletter](#).

PARKS IN THE DARK - *Gloria Dickie*

If you think there is no longer a need for scientists to meet in secret or worry about being able to talk to the public, especially in Canada’s national parks, you might want to read [“Parks in the Dark”](#) by Gloria Dickie posted in The Narwhal last month.

WHO DO YOU CALL?

You may come across situations or observations that you want to tell the authorities about. We recommend you have these phone numbers handy. Remember, cell phone coverage is spotty in the mountains so take notes if you need to move on to make a call.

Ambulance, Fire Department, Police (RCMP): 911

Banff Dispatch: 403-762-4506 for Park-related emergency only (avalanche, forest fire, mountain rescue, etc.)

Banff Dispatch: 403-762-1470 for Park non-emergency (e.g. bear or large carnivore sightings, human-wildlife conflicts, injured animal, illegal park activities such as fire, camping, drones)

Kananaskis Emergency Services 403-591-7755 for emergencies, bear, cougar and problem wildlife sightings, illegal activities. This is also the number to report a poacher. If you wish to remain anonymous while reporting a crime, phone 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

CONTACTS

(Please let us know if you find any of these contacts need to be updated)

CANADA

Environment Minister
Catherine McKenna
Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Chief of Staff to Minister McKenna
Marlo Reynolds
marlo.reynolds@canada.ca

NDP Environment Critic
Linda Duncan
Linda.Duncan.c1@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Opposition Environment Critic
Ed Fast
Ed.Fast@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Leader, Green Party
elizabeth.may@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Blake Richards MP
Richards.B@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

CEO Parks Canada Agency
Parks Canada National Office
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec, J8X 0B3

Sheila Luey
A/Superintendent, Banff Field Unit
Banff.Superintendent@pc.gc.ca

Melanie Kwong
Superintendent, LLKY Field Unit
llyk.superintendent@pc.gc.ca

Alan Fehr
Superintendent, Jasper National Park
Alan.Fehr@pc.gc.ca

Mount Revelstoke/Glacier National Parks
P.O. Box 350
Revelstoke, B.C. Canada
V0E 2S0
250-837-7500
[Email](#)

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Dominic LeBlanc
Dominic.LeBlanc@parl.gc.ca
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

ALBERTA

If your call to your MLA, or any Alberta government office, is long distance then please dial 310-0000 then the area code and the phone number for toll free access.

Minister Environment and Parks
Shannon Phillips
Legislature Office
208 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5K 2B6
Phone: 780.427.2391
Fax: 780.422.6259
lethbridge.west@assembly.ab.ca

MLA Banff-Cochrane
Cameron Westhead
Legislature Office
6th Floor, 9820 - 107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7
Phone: 780.638.1418
Fax: 780.415.0701

Constituency Office:
102, 721 Main Street
P.O. Box 8650
Canmore, AB T1W 0B9
Phone: 403-609-4509
Toll Free: 1-866-760-8281
Fax: 403-609-4513
banff.cochrane@assembly.ab.ca