



## Scout Island Nature Centre 2024 Annual Report

Scout Island Nature Centre is cared for by many “people” volunteers for the enjoyment of every creature!



*The Williams Lake Field Naturalists respectfully acknowledge that Scout Island Nature Centre and all of Williams Lake are on unceded traditional territory of the Secwepemc Nation and specifically the territory of the T'exelcenc, also known as the people of the Williams Lake Band.*

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Scout Island Nature Centre-for wildlife and people!

Anchored floating logs for ducks

Photo by Wilbur Saunders-who not only takes pictures but picks up garbage all year round-Thanks Wilbur

Be sure to go to our website [www.scoutisland.ca](http://www.scoutisland.ca) and view the new and older videos. They give a great overview of all the new programs at the Nature Centre  
Visit our face book page to be kept up to date on what is happening

## Message from the Williams Lake Field Naturalists

**Scout Island Nature Centre is operated by the Williams Lake Field Naturalists in partnership with the City of Williams Lake and the Nature Trust of BC.**

President Williams Lake Field Naturalists--Margaret Waring

My goal has been to support our club and the Scout Island Nature Centre. It was a year of challenge and change. Our new Executive Director, Megan Taylor, recently resigned to move to Vancouver Island with her partner.

Club activities have included some excellent field trips and evening programs. Six copies of our Newsletter, The Muskrat Express were published. We had a yard and plant sale in May and the funds raised were given as a bursary to a graduating grade 12 student. The Directors met monthly. Members who are not directors are welcomed to help us. Loyd C. has been working on bluebirds, organizing routes, and arranging house building and writing articles for our newsletter and the Tribune. Our Christmas bird count was organized by Sean D., Phil R. And Lubna K. Jim S. produced the newsletter and sent periodic email updates to you. I, along with other directors were supporting and learning with our new Executive Director for Scout Island Nature Centre.

We met with the City several times, updating each other regarding the management of Scout Island. Discussions and meetings occurred about Marie Sharpe Kindergarten use of the Nature House downstairs classroom and time available for other Marie Sharpe classes to have weekly visits. We met and shared information with our Nature Trust representative and local First Nations.

We are managing the funds that come from donations, grants, the City, regional district and School district for the management of Scout Island. We continue the ongoing battle to control the spread of invasive weeds and to establish native plants. A successful public event, Marsh Festival took place in June. We did not have a banquet in 2024 as we did not have someone to lead this event. I have had a number of inquiries about us having another banquet and hope someone will step up to be a leader. We are beginning to look at financing from grants and donations for the Otter Point Bridge that needs replacement.

We welcome and need you, your ideas, suggestions and participation.

It is a privilege to be part of this dedicated, knowledgeable, hard-working and skilled group of members and volunteers  
[williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca](http://williamslakefieldnaturalists.ca)

Members at the AGM March 2025

Ordell Steen, Lubna Kahn, Lara Roorda, Margaret Waring and Fred Mc Mechan



## Year in Review and Scout Island Nature Centre Partners

Scout Island Nature Centre managed since 1978 by the WL Field Naturalists,

- Provides nature education to all ages
- Conserves and enhances the Nature Centre's wildlife habitat, vegetation and other natural values
- Provides a natural place for viewing wildlife and plants, facilitated by a system of walking trails
- Provides community gathering place for natural history programs and research, conservation discussions, and ideas and actions for ecological sustainability

**415 children took part in Summer Programs**

**175 Nature Programs were presented to school classes and community groups (2023-2024 school year)**

**At least 12 000 explored the trails**



**And wildlife continued to call Scout Island home**

A wonderful shot of a pelican by Lubna Khan

The WL Field Naturalists have managed the Nature Centre as volunteers since 1978. Joy in nature is the first step to the care and stewardship of nature. Scout Island's many partners help us provide this joy in nature to our community.

The **City of Williams Lake** provided funding to help maintain staff levels for community programs. The City of Williams Lake also provided in-kind support through maintenance of the Nature House (upkeep, hydro and phone) and brand new windows in the Nature House this year. It is a great partnership –WL Field Naturalists, **Nature Trust of British Columbia**, which owns the land, and The City of Williams Lake.

**Fisheries and Oceans Canada** collaborated with Scout Island so that we could provide the Stream to Sea Program to schools throughout the area, the Climate Change and Effects on Salmon to all grade 7 classes, and the Salmon Trip to grade 9-12 students.

The **City and the Cariboo Regional District** together provided a Fee for Service for the Scout Island Trail System. The Fee for Service helped fund control of invasive weeds, maintenance of all the new boardwalks and the building of three outdoor classrooms. The third outdoor classroom was covered by a generous donation from **Gibraltar Mines**. Summer staff salaries were paid in part by **School District 27** and Service **Centre Canada** (Summer Jobs Program). We collaborated with the **Province of BC through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy** to provide Air Quality Education and support the popular "Go by Bike" program. The **Drax Community Fund** grant funded a second year of the "Environment and Ecology" course for high school students. A grant from the **Cariboo Regional District and City of Williams Lake via the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Society** helped to integrate art into nature programs. **BC Conservation Foundation** provided funding for the Community Bat program in our area. It is thanks to partnerships with all of the above and other community volunteers and donors that the Nature Centre continues to thrive and engage so many with nature as well as protect wildlife and the natural landscape.



## Community Programs

### Family Events

There were several Family Events including:

The “Great Backyard Bird Count” in February attended by a small, enthusiastic group, ranging in age from about 6 to 60’s. We started inside watching birds at the feeders and then went out where we were lucky enough to see red winged blackbirds, house finches, house sparrows, white crowned sparrows, chickadees, hairy woodpeckers, spotted towhee and ravens



“Who Knew Birds Could Fly So Fast” in October. This highlighted the MOTUS migratory animal tracking station that is set up on the roof of the Nature House



The always popular “Earth Friendly Holiday Event” in December. This is a team effort involving several community groups held at the Art Centre. People of all ages work on holiday craft. Martin is helping Riel Tate build a bird feeder. Thanks to the Tribune for this picture.

Martin and summer staff provided nature programs for the Cariboo Chilcotin Partners for Literacy, Home School groups, Little Chiefs Day Care, Explore the Puddle, Botaino Day Camp, and Cub/Beaver Scouts.



Scout Island staff took part in both “Arts on the Fly” and the Salmon Festival in Horsefly as well as the Boys and Girls Club Street Party, and the Children’s Festival.

Photo  
by  
Monika  
from the  
cariboo-  
chilcotin  
birds  
google  
group



### **Blue Bird Program by Loyd Czmadia**

I want to thank all of our members for supporting the Bluebird Program, in particular the members who volunteer one or more days to ready their routes for the returning birds. When the program began around 1978, the Williams Lake Field Naturalists installed nearly 500 nest boxes, hoping to convince agriculturalists to stop spraying insecticides (this has generally worked). We also collect data on our nest boxes about eggs and young and breeding birds and use standardized forms so comparisons can be made year to year. Currently, the Mountain Bluebird Program has 32 volunteers who manage over 1,000 nest boxes on more than 30 routes. Most routes are located throughout Becher’s Prairie, as they were in 1978 when the program began, but other routes now exist closer to Williams Lake, and others still are farther afield, for example, along the Dog Creek Road as far as the Empire Valley Ranch. I believe we are doing good work. and every year the boxes fledge thousands of hungry birds. I believe we are doing good work.

Note 607 hours of volunteer time in 2024!

### **Nature Programs for Children**

#### Tales and Trails By Naomi Weil

The Tales and Trails program meets every Wednesday at 10:30.

The session can last 45-90 min. depending on the needs and interests of the families that are in attendance that morning. This is a “drop in” adult/child participation program. The ages this year have ranged from newborn to six years old. Attendance has varied from 4-21 children with most days attendance being about 10-14 children. When I am unable to lead the group, Joan Lozier fills in and often joins sessions staying connected and familiar with the families. This year, we have had grandparents, moms, dads and caregivers attend!



The Tales and Trails program meets in the fall and spring months under the outdoor cover. We begin with a song and story as well as puppet play or a simple display of nature items put out for investigation. Items such as cones and sticks, using magnifying glasses to take a closer look comparing things like colour, texture and size. We then head out to dawdle the trails. Sometimes we are in search of discovering nests and ant hills or other nature treasures as well as recent activity or sightings of wildlife around the island. Visiting the marsh to see the turtles and herons were a popular destination for us during the fall months. Most often we set out with the intention to embrace the simple pleasure of being together out on the trails.

During the winter months we meet inside the Nature House allowing families a chance to properly dress their children before we head outdoors.



Nature Fun – 2024 by Summer Staff-Adrien Zimmerman, Madi Riplinger, and Cheleine Doyle

Over seven weeks in July and August, summer staff and Nature Fun adventurers explored a wide variety of topics. The program consisted of morning and afternoon sessions for children aged 4-8 from 9:30 am -12:00 pm or 1:00 pm-3:30 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Friday mornings. Each week had a different theme. The themes of this summer were: Surprise Week, Birds, Grossology, Plants, Water, Art & Building, and Mammals. These sessions started with a short introduction to the specific topic of the day. Examples, specimens, and hands on experiments or crafts were often included. An outdoor activity, walk and/or game centred around the day's topic was then incorporated. Every Wednesday the program Art in Nature was run for 9-13 year olds. This all-day program dug deeper into the week's theme with a couple short lessons and bigger nature art projects. This year's art projects included making rock plaques, sketching organs, creating ant bookmarks, sculpting clay bats and sea creatures, testing watercolour techniques, making flower presses, and plaster tracks

This year, a new program was run called “Art and Building”. This was an all week program taught by Madi for 8-13 year olds that ran from 9-3:30. Each day had a separate theme such as bats, bees and insects. The group completed many art and building projects including bat house building, constructing and painting a bee fence, creating an insect hotel, sculpting clay, making beeswax food wraps and mega bug collages. This program was very successful and the whole week allowed the leaders and kids to form stronger connections with each other.

Boitano Summer camp visited Scout Island for 4 days over the summer and were provided nature programs by the summer staff. The Boys and Girls Club and the Foundary also came for summer nature programs. There were 415 children enjoying nature with staff this summer. The **Cariboo Regional District and City of Williams Lake via the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Society** helps to support this popular program.







### **Air Quality Education**

By Erin Hitchcock

One of the main components of the Air Quality Education program is its participation in the Earth Challenge -a partnership with the Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society and SD 27. (see details in school programs below). You can also visit <https://breatheasywilliamslake.org/tools-for-schools/> to view air quality lesson materials.

Erin continued to write articles for the Breatheasywilliamslake.org website and submitted to publications like the Tribune and *Local Dirt Magazine*

Erin provided an air quality table featuring information, activities and a display at the Marsh Magic event in June at Scout Island. Those who attended her table expressed interest in air quality issues. This event allowed for more public engagement on air quality due to face-to-face interactions.

Erin has been in contact with the School District 27 superintendent of schools about vehicle idling and GoByBike Week. Erin is in the process of preparing an idling package for the district to be sent to schools with an additional request for schools to continue reminding parents to turn their engines off while parked at schools and bus stops.

Scout Island has 10 Purple Air monitors that are to be donated to Carter's Project. Other Purple Air monitors have been up and running for more than three years in Williams Lake and area and can assist residents on local air quality as it relates to specific neighborhoods. Visit <https://cyclone.unbc.ca/aqmap/index.html#4/56.44/-109.09> to view current data or [www2.purpleair.com](http://www2.purpleair.com)



Engaging people at Marsh Magic

### BC Community Bat Program

Scout Island is partnered with the BC Community Bats Program (Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation sponsored). Martin is the coordinator for the Cariboo-Chilcotin. The Community Bats Program is working to generate a greater understanding of bats and to gather data about where they live and what species they are. Much of what we learn begins with reports from the public. Thanks to the volunteers that train to count bats with Martin and then do the counts over the summer late at night.





## School Programs Grades K-12

### Nature Kindergarten BY Kacie Young and Tanya Isnardy

The Marie Sharpe Kindergarten classes along with their teachers, Kacie Young and Tanya Isnardy, have had a wonderful year of explorations at Scout Island. We all appreciate the immersive experience Scout Island offers as we participate in land-based learning. Throughout the year students have bug hunted, bird watched, dipped for water bugs and explored the ice. Students have also enjoyed their outdoor play at Aspen Place: tree climbing, fort building and creating imaginary play. As this is our final year using this space we are so grateful for the opportunity to learn and play at Scout Island. Thank you to all the supporters of this amazing program!



Aspen Place-everyone's favorite





### **Nature School Programs for School Classes Offered September-April**

Notes from Martin:

It's never dull - I love the variety of nature activities that I get to take part in, and most of all I love being with the kids. Their questions still crack me up (though no laughing out loud is usually permissible) and their enthusiasm for and wonder at nature in all its magnificence is motivating as a constant reminder of why we prioritize this work.

Most of you know that our educational programs are different each season. There continues to be a pattern of peak demand in autumn and spring. Kim Zalay, Erin Hitchcock (Air Quality), Mary Forbes (Animals of all sorts), and Sandra Campbell, (Climate Change) are excellent education team members who help me shoulder the load during the school year. Of course, our three full-time summer staff as well as the part-time year-round high school staff are invaluable. Madi, Cheilene, and Adrien ran a very smooth ship last summer. We had high school students Ella and Winter helping care for animals and assist with birthday parties and other community events.



### **Summary by Sue**

Fall found Mary at Nesika for several days providing her Bears and Spider programs for the entire school. She also visited Likely School and Dog Creek. Her programs included lively presentations in the classroom and outside time for related activities.

Martin's fall programs at Scout Island often last the full day. He works with each teacher to provide a program that fits what she/he is working on with the class. In the fall, his "Getting Ready for Winter" covered how plants and animals prepare for winter and then included other related topics the teacher had requested like bird identification. He also led "What is where?" for grades 2-7 which gave students the opportunity to create and read maps to discover outdoor sites of interest. It was done at Scout Island and schools. Fossils Hunting was really popular all fall and took place behind Walmart. Students climbed the hill and found real fossils.

January-March 2024, Martin was teaching skiing and winter ecology on Bull Mountain (even when there was no snow) and ice safety and surviving the cold at Scout Island and at schools.



Kim focused on winter ecology including tracking, snow experiments, and surviving the cold at Scout Island.





## **Nature School Programs Offered May-June**

### **By Summer Staff Adrien, Madi, and Cheliene**

The summer staff could not have led such awesome programs without support from countless others. Our Environmental Educator Martin Kruus developed and taught programs with the teacher naturalists. Michaela Waterhouse helped the summer staff learn bird identification, Ordell Steen aided the staff in learning about local floral while Megan Taylor educated them on the invertebrates of the area. Sue Hemphill, mentored the summer staff and aided them in planning and executing school lessons. In addition, we were joined by two UBC teacher candidates who spent three weeks each at the Island, learning about Nature Education and sharing their educational expertise with the summer staff.

Kids were encouraged to engage with nature using their owl eyes, deer ears, coyote noses, raccoon touch, and bug tongues in order to experience the outdoors through different points of view and senses. The Teacher Naturalists constantly asked children questions to encourage problem-solving and thought-provoking answers. This technique, along with nature walks, games, and lessons, provided opportunities for all school children to learn about nature while keeping them engaged and confident in their own abilities.

This year we offered seven different programs at the Nature Centre to school groups: Bugs, Birds, Marsh and Amphibians, Life in the Marsh and Ocean, Nature Detective, Plants, and What's Happening Around the Nature Centre. Additionally, if classes could not come to us, we took Scout Island to them, and showed them the nature in their school yard with our Explore the Outdoors at your School program. The Summer Staff brought programs to schools in town as well as two trips to Centennial Park in 100 Mile House, and a visit to Tatla Lake School. We had two very special classes that took the opportunity to sleepover in the Nature House



Bug hunting is always a favorite



The covered areas were perfect as outdoor classrooms in all kinds of weather.



There was a total of 66 programs in May and June. Most school days were filled to capacity in terms of staff time, with some days so busy staff were running to keep up. These groups came from almost all schools within School District 27, even some as far as Yunesitine, Likely Elementary, 100 Mile House Elementary, and Lac La Hache Elementary.

Some feedback from teachers:

*Cheleine was amazing! When going to programs that are run by non-teachers I'm always wary that the delivery will be awkward or not engage my students. This was not the case! She was super interesting, super animated, very confident and had great group management skills. I was super impressed. She exceeded my expectations!*

*Absolutely fantastic. Great timing, balancing of different activities, and hands on exploring and observations, good boundaries. Nice, short talking pieces too. Thank you for coming! I love that the instructors chose to teach in our school forest! Shows that they did a bit of research about the location*

*"These programs are a great reason to spend some more time outside and help manage the end-of-year chaos that seems to overcome the students."*

These fantastic programs were funded by the City of Williams Lake, School District 27, Fisheries and Oceans BC, the Canada Summer Jobs Program and local donations.

### **Stream to Sea Program**

The Stream to Sea program was again offered through Scout Island (funding from DFO). Classes (10-14 classes each year) raised Chinook salmon from eggs to fry. 30 eyed eggs of Chinook salmon were provided in late October to each classroom along with all the equipment required to raise them in aquariums. Martin visited each of the classes twice during the winter to do learning activities about the lifecycle and importance of salmon, as well as watershed health. All classes came to Scout Island in May and June to release their fry to swim to the Fraser and then to the ocean. Students also took part in a variety of hands on activities to learn more about the salmon they raised and the watersheds they live in led by Martin and the summer staff.



Dissection at the fry release



First in a cup to be admired and then into the water to go to the ocean



### **Engaging High School Youth in Nature and Stewardship**

We have been able to offer nature education programs for youth (high school students) in a variety of ways over the last 15 years. There are more youth interested in outdoor exploring, natural history appreciation, and stewardship of the environment, and we work at providing experiences and courses that interest and engage them as well as really connect them with nature. This has proved especially challenging over the past few years because there is less flexibility in the high school schedule as well as youth being distracted to other activities. We have worked closely with the school district and community partners to engage students and both the new “Environmental Experience Exposure Program” and long standing “Salmon Trip” have been successful with senior students. We also provided two intensive nature/environment courses for the grade 7 classes --an introduction to “Climate Change and an introduction to the ecosystems of the Cariboo Chilcotin trying to lay down the foundation of nature literate citizens. Because of the more flexible Grade 7 schedule it is easier to do day long field trips and longer programs.

#### **Environmental Experience Exposure Program (E3)**

Our Environment Exposure Experience (“E cubed”) high school program, led collaboratively with UBC Research Forest’s Wild and Immersive educator, Mark Gill, continued with well attended field trips over the 2024-2025 school year. Grade 10-12 students get a chance to interact directly with professionals and try some of their tools and techniques from their everyday work projects. Each day long field trip has a theme including organic vegetable growing, fire mitigation, search and rescue and value-added wood tour. Without the support of the DRAX Community Fund, it would not have been

possible to supply students with these opportunities to be curious about outdoor work in the Cariboo-Chilcotin.



Value Added Wood Tour-learning how to do a biscuit joint



Fire Mitigation-a controlled burn



## Salmon Trip 2024 September 18-20 Grades 10-12

Eighteen students took part in this year's trip. The first day was spent on the Quesnel River near Likely where we were able to watch both Chinook and Sockeye salmon spawning.



Students helped to beach seine to collect small fish for identification

After traveling to Gavin Lake Forestry Camp (who generously hosted us for sleeping and wonderful meals), students canoed and learned about the life cycle of salmon



The second day, we traveled to Mount Polly to tour the restoration work that has been done on Hazeltine Creek and learned how the recovery of the creek is being monitored. This was followed by a forest hike to learn about the ecosystems of the area. Aubrey Jackson met us back at Gavin Lake and showed students how to prepare salmon for cooking on a fire- this, of course, became part of dinner.



That evening was filled with salmon dissections and discussions of how habitat loss and climate change are affecting the health of salmon stocks.

Day three we traveled to Quesnel River Research Centre to work with various researchers doing projects at the centre.

This included learning about the Emergency Chinook Enhancement program and how to measure fish accurately.





### **Independent Studies and Capstone Projects Grades 10-12 by Martin Kruus**

I have continued to work with the high school to offer students opportunities to pursue independent studies or Capstone projects related to natural history and/or environmental stewardship. This school year I helped three students connect with mentors. Teadora Simons has been doing an Independent Directed Study (IDS) with Tim Philpotts about fungi identification and collection. She was part of a fall mushroom workshop hosted by Scout Island. Oihannes Moliner-Clark is very talented at spotting mule deer antlers. He has been pursuing an IDS about Mule Deer in the Meldrum Creek area with Rick Dawson. His data collection was hampered this winter by the lack of snow (less tracks). Garrett Scrooby has been working with Lynn Capling to further his interest in Astronomy.

### **Grade 7 Engagement with Nature and Environment**

2024 Climate Change Watershed Health and Salmon This program was again led by Sandra Campbell. It began with two days of in classroom sessions to learn about the basics of climate change. This was followed by day long field trips to Scout Island in May for each class. During this time, Sandra and Martin gave students opportunities to experience the aquatic ecosystems the salmon live in during their life cycle and how they are changing because of climate change



Learning about the ocean ecosystem and the other species that share it with the salmon

### 2024 Earth Challenge



Scout Island provides two parts of the Earth Challenge for students. One part is based on the “Knowing the Ecosystems of the Cariboo Chilcotin.” It was taught by Martin and the summer staff over 4 days in April when the 10 Grade 7 class each came for one day to Scout Island. Students learned about each of the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems they live in or near through walks and games. During these days, Air Quality lessons were also provided by Erin Hitchcock engaging students with ideas on how we can do our individual parts to reduce emissions. This was done through a PowerPoint presentation, discussion and interactive games, covering the respiratory system, health and environmental impacts of poor air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, particulate matter, air monitors, and climate change.

Other parts of the Earth Challenge were taught by Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society Staff (Water Wise and Waste Wise) and the BC Invasives Council during these field trip days. The actual Earth Challenge when students put what they learned to answering quizzes and action contests, was held at the junior high near Earth Day.

Do you think the marsh can help us answer quiz questions like this?

What is an ecosystem?

- Living things + non-living things + sunshine
- Living things + inter-relationships + the water cycle
- Living things + non-living things + inter-relationships



These hands on immersed in nature programs are the basis of the stewards of the future.

*As biologist Rachel Carson said, when it comes to guiding children, it would help to remember that it isn't half so important for them to know as to feel. "If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom," Carson said, "then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow."*

## **Nature Interpretation for Community and Tourists**

Visitors to the Nature House came in a steady stream every weekend throughout the year. We were able to have the Nature House open one day each weekend even in the fall-winter-spring (2 days a 24weekend and afternoons in the summer) for a total of 850 drop in visitors. That, of course, does not include people who booked programs or came to pick up and drop off children. They came from all around the world but most are from the Cariboo Chilcotin and other parts of BC. Scout Island now has a very popular Facebook page followed by 2300 people <https://www.facebook.com/groups/134844426525862/> This is where you can go to see all the wildlife living at or visiting the nature centre photographed by some really great photographers. You can also go there to be updated on the latest programs or to ask a natural history question.

Other community groups also held their events at Scout Island. The Williams Lake First Nations held a 3-day Cultural Camp for children in August. There were opportunities for the camp participants and children in our "Nature Kids program to share activities. The Cariboo Chilcotin Orienteering Club filled a day with fun orienteering opportunities related to Easter treats March 30. In June, SD 27 invited families with children 0-5 to explore Scout Island while looking for treasure, enjoy crafts and play games. The Invasive Species Council of BC held a BioBlitz in early fall.

## **Marsh Magic -New in 2024 for the Community**

By Lara Roorda

The Williams Lake Field Naturalists and Scout Island staff partnered with the City of Williams Lake and numerous other organizations to bring Marsh Magic to the people of Williams Lake. Between 10am and 2pm on June 9<sup>th</sup>, somewhere between 250 and 300 individuals joined in to explore, learn and celebrate the magic of our unique and dynamic marsh at Scout Island. The event included more than a dozen stations involving crafts, displays, educational stations and activities. Upon arrival at the nature house, participants were given a passport identifying the numerous stations and organizations and a central map was available for reference. It was wonderful to see families, adults and children alike enjoying the event. All in attendance were welcome to enter the draw for a gift basket of eco-friendly treasures and a big congratulations goes out to Michael Moses who won the basket draw!! Response to Marsh Magic (which occurred during both Bike to Work/School week and Oceans Day) was overwhelmingly positive. Two of my personal favorite quotes overheard included; "This was the best day EVER grandma!" and "Those creatures were AMAZING!" (when emerging from the Ocean tank demonstration). Huge thank you to all who contributed to make this event possible including the many, many volunteers, Scout Island staff, local business contributing to the gift basket (Beaver Valley Feeds, City of Williams Lake) and the numerous organizations that manned the stations (TRU, CCPL, UBC Research Forest, Williams Lake Orienteering Club, Air Aware, Invasive Species Council of BC, Stream of Dreams, Go by Bike, City of Williams Lake, WL First Nations). It is so fantastic for our community to be able to come together and celebrate our healthy lake and marsh at a magical place like Scout Island that is so central for Williams Lake and accessible to all

People started Here



Fish Art-Stream of Dreams

Learning about the chinook fry in the tank before going out to release them into the river with Martin Kruus.





Participants visited with the new species in the Intertidal Tank as part of the Oceans Day celebration

Thank-you to the Pacific Salmon Foundation for funding the new tank and a visit from Doug Swanston, Seacology, to set the new tank up and provide new intertidal species.



### **Taking Care of the Nature Centre Inside and Out**

2024 was a busy time for the Scout Island Infrastructure Committee and all the volunteers as usual. We all thought there would be a down year for major projects when the Otter Point Boardwalk was completed in January 2024 until we discovered that the Otter Point Bridge was no longer level. Directors asked Celtic Engineering for advice. As in the past, Celtic stepped up to help, did an assessment and provided a plan for replacement. Signs were posted to reduce the number of people allowed on the bridge until it is replaced. After much discussion, directors decided to replace it with a metal structure with a wooden deck expected to last 50 years. This is part of the overall management plan for Scout Island to build structures that will be more resilient in the face of stresses caused by the climate crisis (like flooding). In 2024 the fundraising began to raise a total of \$170 000 with a goal of building in summer 2026.



Present Otter Point Bridge

The new bridge will include improved access so that all of Otter Point will be accessible by people with mobility challenges and widened for machine access to fight fires on Otter Point (again part of climate change planning).



Three new picnic tables--Two were built by Martin from left over boardwalk timbers (we never waste) and a cement table donated by Grosso Cement in memory of Riedel family members

Rope railings were installed on island trail to replace broken wood railings. A grant from the Williams Lake Community Forest (\$5000) and volunteer help from members, staff from the Williams Lake and District Credit Union and a school class made this possible.



We also carried out a joint project with the Invasive Species Council of BC(ISCBC). This project Included removal of invasive plants at the west end of Scout Island, installation of exclosures, and planting native shrubs and trees. This project was also supported by Gibraltar Mines who provided plants as well as several days of staff to help with the work. Natalie Swift was one of the volunteers on a public day for planting with Emma from ISCBC





The third covered area was completed at Aspen Place and Ms Isnardy's kindergarten found lots of ways to use it.



Caring for Scout Island includes taking care of wildlife and there was a lot of focus on turtles summer of 2024. One turtle was rescued and cared for by Megan and went from injured to released







Two turtle nests were found and protected as they were near trails. It will be July 2025 before the hatchlings emerge

Inside the Nature House there were baby snails



## The Roots of Our Success -- Community Support and Volunteers

Scout Island runs on volunteer energy and dedication!



Kim and Sue planting cat tails



Martin (he volunteers too) building one of the two tables he built summer 2024

Groups of staff from the Williams Lake and District Credit Union helped out on trail building and maintenance projects. Their time helping at Scout Island is paid by the Credit Union. Gibraltar Mines sent crews over three days (21 people in total) to eradicate invasive plants, set up fencing and irrigation and plant trees.

Volunteers continue to be the heart of the Nature Centre. Members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists are our main contributors of time and energy. Directors raise funds, hire staff, many other management tasks needed for things to run smoothly. Many other members of the community also pitch in –just show up and do what is needed like Jim Buckland fought weeds for 135 hours in 2024. Volunteer support, material donations, and financial backing make the Nature Centre the lively community centre that it is. Staff and visitors to the Nature Centre are thankful to the volunteers who contributed 4195 hours to the Nature Centre in 2024 valued at \$131 217. Materials and Services donated (including City of Williams Lake contributions) are valued at \$44 087 for 2024

### Looking Forward

At the writing of this annual report we are well into 2025. As of April 2025, there is a new manager for Scout Island, Lara Roorda. Lara has been a Williams Lake Field Naturalist director for a number of years, so she knows Scout Island well. Martin, who has been Education Coordinator for nearly 5 years continues to develop and lead all of the nature programs as well as supervise the contract educators and the summer staff. He and Lara are bringing new ideas and energy to the Nature Centre.

At this time, we also know that this is the last year for Marie Sharpe kindergarten classes at Scout Island. Nature Kindergarten (a partnership between Scout Island and Marie Sharpe) began in in 2016 with kindergarten being at Scout Island full time. They have only been at Scout Island part time over the past two years. In the future, Marie Sharpe kindergarten and other Marie Sharpe classes will continue to come to Scout Island for nature programs in the same way other schools come-booking programs for a day at a time. Scout Island will continue to be Marie Sharpe's way to connect with nature. Starting fall 2025, Exploring the Puddle will have a Nature Preschool at Scout Island all week long. We are looking forward to this partnership.

There is a list of projects to be completed including new rails for the trail on Otter Point, fundraising and purchasing materials for the new bridge, fixing the steps on the far island, and continued work enhancing the habitat including controlling invasive weeds. Of course, we also can't wait to see if baby turtles emerge from the nests made last year. We look forward to what 2025 brings us.



2024 Summer Staff



## **The People that Make Scout Island Nature Centre Work**

### Williams Lake Field Naturalists

The Directors and members of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists have met the challenge of managing Scout Island Nature Centre since 1978. Through their volunteer efforts, programs and materials are developed, staff hired and trained, funds raised, trails repaired, buildings and infrastructure improved, weeds pulled, boardwalks built, bird boxes installed, habitat restored, and much more.

### Directors as of March 2024

Margaret Waring- President  
Nola Daintith – Secretary  
Katharine VanSpall--Director  
Sue Hemphill Director  
Ray Hornby --Director  
Peter Opie—Director  
Cathie Hamm--Director  
Jean Oke--Director  
Lara Roorda --Director  
Ken Day-- Director  
Kim Zalay-- Director  
Michaela Waterhouse --Director  
Natalie Swift-- Director

### Scout Island Nature Centre Staff

Co Executive Directors-Sue Hemphill and Megan Taylor (moved on in March 2025)

Education Coordinator- Martin Kruus

Nature Educators:

Mary Forbes

Erin Hitchcock (air quality)

Kim Zalay

Sandra Campbell

Summer Staff- Teacher Naturalists in 2024 included:

Adrien Zimmerman, Madi Riplinger, and Cheleine Doyle

Teacher Naturalists in Training (high school students)- Ella Kruus, Avery Johnston, Carys Coppock, Winter McLaughlin

Denise Deschene is the caretaker

Arnold Lucier helps to take care of the grounds year-round and in the summer had help from Corey Reynolds and Mila Islamova

You also find Kacie Young and Tanya Isnardy the Kindergarten teachers and Karen Dillabough the Kindergarten Education Assistant

#### **Scout Island Nature Centre Partners 2024**

- BC Conservation Foundation—Bat Project
- Cariboo Regional District and City of Williams Lake - Central Cariboo Recreation and Leisure Services Function
- City of Williams Lake –General Funding
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Gibraltar Mine
- Province of BC through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy—Air Quality Education
- Province of BC through a Community Gaming Grant
- Service Centre Canada (Summer Job Program)
- School District 27
- The Nature Trust of British Columbia
- Williams Lake Community Forest
- Williams Lake Field Naturalists

#### **Scout Island Nature Centre Supporters**

- BC Nature (Federation Of British Columbia Naturalists)
- Cariboo Foundation-Anonymous donor and Jean Waite
- Cariboo Regional District and City of Williams Lake, through the Central Cariboo Arts & Culture Society
- Pacific Salmon Foundation
- Williams Lake and District Credit Union
- Woodlot Education Society

Scout Island Nature Centre could not continue to offer the natural history programs, the tonic of wilderness to our community or the protected space for wildlife in our urban setting without the support of many other individual community members and businesses who donated their time, funding, and ideas

# Williams Lake Field Naturalists

## Statement of Revenue and Expenses December 31 2024

*Note: This statement has been prepared using the accrual method of financial reporting.*

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b><u>SINC</u></b>	<b><u>WLFN</u></b>	<b><u>Gaming</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b>School and Community Programs</b>				
Gaming Grant			21,000	21,000
Other Grants				
Federal Summer Student Grant	14,616			14,616
Fisheries & Oceans Canada	18,951			18,951
City of Williams Lake Operating Grant (in part)	10,475			10,475
Cariboo Foundation - Anonymous donor	4,000			4,000
BCCF Bat Project	5,000			5,000
School District #27	10,092			10,092
Art in Nature	2,500			2,500
CANOE Conference	16,812			16,812
Program Fees	9,071			9,071
<b>Air Quality Education</b>				
Go By Bike BC Society	1,200			1,200
Province of BC	6,000			6,000
<b>Nature Center Maintenance &amp; Improvements</b>				
Trails, Signage and Habitat Restoration				
City of WL	15,000			15,000
Gibraltar Mines	10,000			10,000
WL Community Forest	5,000			5,000
Pacific Salmon Foundation	5,075			5,075
Other	300			300
Boardwalk Restoration				
Donations	4,843			4,843
General				
Nature Trust of BC	1,000			1,000
<b>Sales &amp; Fundraising</b>				
Sales (books, t-shirts, bug viewers, etc.)	561			561
Fundraising (chocolate sales)	4,105			4,105
<b>General - for use in any of the above programs</b>				
City of Williams Lake Operating Grant (in part)	10,000			10,000
Cariboo Foundation - Jean Waite	2,707			2,707
Donations (Individuals)	21,465			21,465
Donations (Organizations & Businesses)	100			100
GST Rebate	772			772
Banquet Income				0
Investment Income	66	141		207
<b>WLFN Revenue</b>				
Memberships		5,807		5,807
Donations		628		628
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 179,711</b>	<b>\$ 6,576</b>	<b>\$ 21,000</b>	<b>\$ 207,286</b>



**Williams Lake Field Naturalists**

**Statement of Revenue and Expenses December 31 2024**

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>SINC</b>	<b>WLFN</b>	<b>Gaming</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>School and Community Programs</b>				
Wages and Benefits - Summer & Student Wages	47,908			47,908
Wages and Benefits - Education Coordinator & Executive Director	54,672		21,000	54,672
Nature Educators (Contractors)	8,241			8,241
Mileage	3,545		555	3,545
Miscellaneous	2,632			2,632
Cleaning (Contractors)	2,386			2,386
Cleaning (Staff)	240			240
BCCF Bat Program Expense	5,062			5,062
CANOE Conference	14,573			14,573
<b>Air Quality Education</b>				
Williams Lake Air Quality Program Support	4,544			4,544
<b>Nature Centre Maintenance &amp; Improvements</b>				
Nature House Displays & Equipment	5,742			5,742
Trails, Signage and Habitat Restoration	19,142			19,142
Boardwalk Restoration	23,353			23,353
Wages and Benefits - Groundskeeper	5,868			5,868
<b>Sales &amp; Fundraising</b>				
Fundraising (chocolate sales)				0
<b>General - support of any of the above programs</b>				
Office Supplies & Expenses	3,002	624		3,625
Advertising	241			241
Banking Service Charges	753	44	43	796
Insurance	2,400	1,368		3,768
Bookkeeping	1,714			1,714
Bursary		1,500		1,500
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 206,016</b>	<b>\$ 3,535</b>	<b>\$ 21,598</b>	<b>\$ 231,149</b>

Prepared by Jaimie Cappan, CPA

Approved by Ken Day, Treasurer

**Thoughts about Finances**

The School and Community Programs wages continue to be the main expense (63%). This covers Summer Staff, Nature Educators, Executive Director/Manager, and Education Coordinator wages. The Williams Lake Field Naturalists are very grateful to the City of Williams Lake (\$20 000 fee for services), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (\$21,000 fee Salmon Education Coordinator), and School District 27 (\$8,000 School Programs Grant) for their consistent funding for staff wages.