

Bulrush and Toad Talk



Happenings at Pleasant Valley Wetland Heritage Park

October 2020 Vol. 1 No. 1

September 30 2020 was the perfect warm, sunny day to host an event that had so much to celebrate. This was the day we officially opened to the public, completed an “edible trees” forest garden, launched our wetland ambassadors and held a park dedication ceremony with Elders from Splat’s in and Neskonlith, attended by the Spallumcheen Deputy Mayor and local community organization representatives.

Dedication of the Park to Dr. Mary Thomas

Splat’s in Elder Ethel Thomas offered a Secwepemc prayer to open the ceremony. Ethel spoke of her sister Mary as her inspiration and, as September 30 was



Orange Shirt Day, Ethel told us a little about life in a residential school. Bonnie Thomas dedicated the park to her mother, revered Secwepemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas. Mary’s knowledge of culturally important native trees and shrubs and their traditional uses is included on the interpretive signs throughout the park.

The sign text is drawn from “Secwepemc People and Plants: Research Papers in Shuswap Ethnobotany”, which was generously donated to the Society by co-editor Dr. Nancy J. Turner. Nancy worked with her friend Mary for many years, documenting her extensive traditional knowledge.

Wetland Ambassadors

Michaela was on hand to represent our youth at the official launch of the wetland ambassador program. Youth assist with planting and a variety of tasks including collecting images for interpretive signage, researching historical land use by the Shuswap and Okanagan Nations, settlers and farmers; and studying historical climate data. Michaela manages a website journal on the



A small park with some large goals:

- Showcase Spallumcheen ecological and cultural history
- Illustrate how restoring wetlands can help mitigate climate change
- Encourage hands on environmental learning for youth
- Create opportunities for active public involvement
- Inspire more landowners to create a wetland on their land.

health of the native plants, trees and shrubs. The ambassadors record carbon sequestration in the trees and shrubs growing in the park year over year, towards our target of storing 3 tonnes of carbon by 2021.

Edible Trees Forest Garden

In collaboration with Tree Canada, the Society planted over 90 “edible” trees and shrubs including apple, pear, choke cherry, elderberry, twinberry,



Saskatoon and snowberry. Volunteers from the Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Society have helped to plant trees and shrubs for us all this year. The volunteers pitched in again after our wetland ambassadors took inventory of the trees and shrubs delivered from Sagebrush Nursery in Oliver. [More on forest gardens](#)



Create your own wetland – how long does it take?

The answer is up to a hundred years... but a pond can start to look natural within months. Find out more information and connect to the wetland experts [from our website](#). The Society started construction of a second wetland pond last year and this is how it looked in less than a year.



September 2019



July 2020

*Pleasant Valley Wetland Heritage Park is managed by the New Beginnings Benevolent Society. To find out more about our programs or become a Member go to <http://new-beginnings-here.ca>. The Park is open year round to the public during daylight hours. **SUBSCRIBE** to our quarterly newsletter by emailing info@new-beginnings-here.ca*

