

flyway



VOLUME 30, NUMBER 4, 2009

Okanagan family leaves conservation legacy

The Young family of Oyama, B.C. has made a generous contribution to wetland conservation, donating a parcel of land to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). The property lies between Wood and Kalamalka Lakes in the central Okanagan Valley.

“We inherited this land from my parents and for years enjoyed having nature right on our doorstep,” says David Young of the four-acre marsh.

“Donating this land to Ducks Unlimited made sense because of their commitment to protecting natural areas like this. We can rest assured that the wetland will be around for future generations to enjoy.”

Brad Arner, B.C.'s manager of conservation programs, says, “Up to 85 per cent of Okanagan Valley wetlands have been drained or filled in. Those that remain are in great jeopardy due to gradual urban growth and increased competition for land. Conserving wetlands like this is increasingly important not only for the wildlife that depend upon them but for the important role they play in water conservation.”

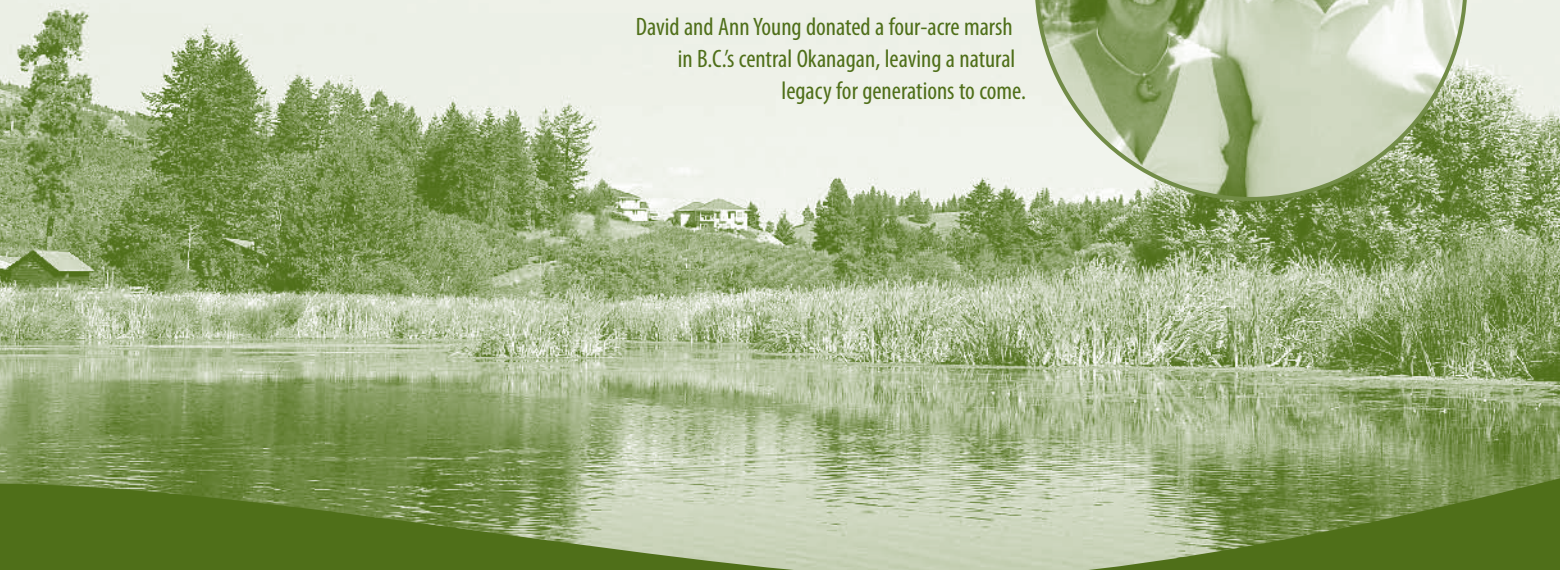
The Oyama wetland provides a migration stopover along the Okanagan Valley, an important corridor of the Pacific Flyway. Waterfowl using the property include mallard, green- and blue-winged teal, cinnamon teal, gadwall, bufflehead, redhead and Canada goose. Bald eagles, osprey, red-tailed hawks, pheasants, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles are also commonly sighted. Fish from Kalamalka Lake spawn in the wetland.

DUC plans to maintain the Oyama wetland in a productive and natural state and in the future may offer programs to enhance community awareness of wetland values and DUC's role in conserving them.

Eco-gift donations are increasingly becoming an attractive option for landowners, for practical financial reasons, and to leave a living legacy now and in the future. If you are interested in learning more about the options available to you, Environment Canada has published information on The Canadian Ecological Gifts Program (<http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/egp-pde/>) or contact your nearest Ducks Unlimited Canada office for more information. ➤



David and Ann Young donated a four-acre marsh in B.C.'s central Okanagan, leaving a natural legacy for generations to come.



Migration hot spots: off the beaten track

During fall migration, outdoor enthusiasts witness droves of birds return to local wetlands to fuel up for their long journeys south. Migration is also a great time for even the unseasoned birder to get out for some adventure and explore some of B.C.'s off-the-beaten-path locations.

For those looking for “new” locations, here are a few hot spots that provide terrific opportunities to stop and observe nature. These locations are just a few of the 540 wetland habitat conservation projects Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has completed across the province:

Watson Slough (North Peace, Fort St. John)

Along the banks of the Peace River, 26 km west of Fort St. John, lies Watson Slough, a site known for its abundant wildlife. Given the slough's proximity to the highway, DUC and partners embarked on the construction of a roadside pullout, walking trail and platforms to improve opportunities for wildlife viewing and a spot for schoolchildren to learn first-hand about wetland conservation. This project is recognized for having some of the most productive agricultural lands north of the Trans-Canada Highway in B.C. Remnants from the farmers' annual crops provide migrating birds with breeding and staging habitat.

Common wildlife: American wigeon, northern shoveler, northern pintail, gadwall and Barrow's goldeneye.

Tunkwa Watershed (Thompson-Nicola Valley, Logan Lake)

In a region known for extreme hot and dry conditions, the Tunkwa Watershed plays a significant role in increasing the landscape's biodiversity by providing a permanent water source. Consisting of 280 hectares of wetland habitat within 5,100 hectares of rangeland and forests, Tunkwa is heavily relied upon by ranchers, forestry companies and outdoor recreationists.

In partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the Tunkwa-Durand Water Users Community, this project addresses range management practices and water supply management.

Common wildlife: American wigeon, lesser scaup, Barrow's and common goldeneye and canvasback ducks.

Jamieson Meadow (Chilcotin, Williams Lake)

The Chilcotin River Valley west of Williams Lake is a largely undiscovered area in B.C. Crown rangeland projects like Jamieson Marsh were developed to enhance waterfowl breeding and staging habitat. This project has a cairn recognizing the conservation agreement with the Gang Ranch, Crown range lessee. Travelling to Jamieson would make for a great day trip for those interested in viewing wildlife in relative solitude.

Common wildlife: northern pintail, American wigeon, northern shoveler, bufflehead and Barrow's goldeneye.

Quintal (South Okanagan, Oliver)

Located south of Oliver, the Quintal project totals 49 hectares along the Okanagan River and includes hay lands, oxbows and flood plain wetlands. The project is immediately adjacent to the South Okanagan Wildlife Management Area, together creating a larger contiguous stretch of wildlife habitat. This project is an important parcel in DUC's effort to restore wetlands in the Okanagan Valley that have been lost due to agricultural development and urban expansion.

Common wildlife: wood duck, northern pintail, blue-winged, cinnamon and green-winged teal and steelhead and rainbow trout.

Minnekhada Regional Park (Fraser Valley, Port Coquitlam)

Minnekhada Regional Park is a favourite wildlife viewing area amongst residents of Coquitlam. A series of trails circle the marsh providing a terrific way to see the bird life in the area. Bordering the Pitt River, the Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Management Area and other conservation areas are just a short distance away. Hundreds of waterfowl and other wildlife have been recorded as the nearby Pitt River flood plains and agricultural lands provide critical staging and wintering habitat for migratory birds.

The park is owned by Metro Vancouver, and DUC manages the water control structures to control water levels and marsh vegetation for maximum use by waterfowl and the public.

Lazo Marsh Wildlife Management Area (Vancouver Island, Courtenay)

On the outskirts of Courtenay, Lazo Marsh Wildlife Management Area features trails and walkways as well as viewing platforms. Although this is a good location year-round for birding, from October to March migratory bird populations are at their peak. Birds gather at this freshwater wetland to feed on the abundant nutrients available on nearby intertidal and agricultural lands. This wetland, along with other nearby conservation areas, is renowned for wintering 10 per cent of the global population of trumpeter swans.

Under a conservation agreement with The Nature Trust of B.C. and the Ministry of Environment, Ducks Unlimited Canada helps control water levels and manages vegetation growth.

Common sightings: trumpeter swans, great blue heron, great horned owl, pileated woodpecker, ring-necked duck.

For more information on these or other DUC projects, visit ducks.ca or call 1-866-384-DUCK and ask to be redirected to your nearest DUC office. ➔



Wetland conservation receives boost with new partnership

Preservation of B.C.'s natural landscapes took a major step forward this summer following the launch of the Wetland Stewardship Partnership (WSP), a multi-agency group dedicated to the conservation of wetlands and other sensitive ecosystems, at Surrey's Serpentine Wildlife Management Area.

"Congratulations to everyone who showed their commitment to protecting wetlands," said B.C. Environment Minister Barry Penner. "This is a key part of the B.C. government's Living Water Smart plan for keeping our water healthy and secure for everyone."

"The Wetland Stewardship Partnership is committed to ensuring that B.C. is a province where wetlands and their larger watersheds are valued and conserved for today and for tomorrow," said Les Bogdan, chair of the WSP and B.C. provincial manager for Ducks Unlimited Canada, one of the founding organizations and an active participant in the group's ongoing operations.

The WSP also unveiled *Wetland Ways: Interim Guidelines for Wetland Protection and Conservation in British Columbia*, a series of guidelines developed to promote best management practices for wetland conservation. Wetland Ways will be field-tested over the next two years among key stakeholders and is available for review on bcwetlands.ca.

At the launch, the WSP highlighted the Wetland Action Plan for B.C., which assesses the current status of and threats to wetlands, evaluates current conservation initiatives, and outlines specific objectives and actions. The plan looks to help mitigate the historic and ongoing



B.C. Environment Minister Barry Penner and Ducks Unlimited Canada's Ian Barnett unveil sign at the designation of the Serpentine Wildlife Management Area in Surrey.

wetland loss experienced across B.C., particularly in areas at risk due to urban expansion and commercial development.

For information and the latest Wetland Stewardship Partnership initiatives check out bcwetlands.ca, where resources such as Wetland Ways, the Green Bylaws Toolkit and other products are available. 🐾

B.C. Environment Minister Barry Penner (far left) and members of the Wetland Stewardship Partnership celebrate the group's formal launch.



Nanaimo marsh benefits from enhancement project

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has set out to complete habitat improvements at Buttertubs Marsh Bird Sanctuary in Nanaimo. Construction crew and equipment were on location in September to replace the aging water control structure and upgrade the north dike along Millstone River.

“After almost 25 years of use, the water control showed signs of wearing out and needed to be replaced,” says DUC regional biologist Dan Buffett. “Without the upgrade, this structure would not have been able to maintain adequate water levels to ensure the wetland’s continued health.”

Buttertubs Marsh offers a scenic walking trail with many opportunities for wildlife viewing, and information posted along the route explains the importance of conserving natural areas within expanding urban areas like Nanaimo. The marsh is located minutes from downtown and is one of the last remaining natural areas within the city.

In addition to a number of recreational opportunities, the area is one of the few remaining intact freshwater wetlands on Vancouver Island that provide staging, feeding and resting habitat to hundreds of waterfowl and other wildlife, particularly during the winter season. Local naturalists have counted 147 bird species, including Canada goose, mallard, wood duck and hooded merganser. Amphibians, deer, beaver, muskrat, mink, river otter and other small mammals have also been sighted. The wildlife area is an important site for certain species at risk, namely red-listed purple martin, American bittern, great blue and green herons, turkey vulture, short-eared owl and painted turtle.

Purchased by The Nature Trust of B.C. (TNT) in the mid-1970s, the marsh was leased to the Ministry of Environment. Today, the ministry along with TNT, the City of Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Field Naturalists jointly manage the property.

When the project started, DUC enhanced the area by creating open water, upgrading the dike and installing the water control structure. Over the years, Ducks has continued to play an active role clearing beaver debris, managing vegetation growth, and repairing and maintaining the control to ensure water levels remain at an ideal level for supporting marsh life.

The restoration of Buttertubs Marsh is funded by DUC’s conservation partners under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the City of Nanaimo, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and DUC volunteers and supporters across B.C. 🐾

flyway

The *Flyway* newsletter is published by Ducks Unlimited Canada
Oak Hammock Marsh Conservation Centre
P.O. Box 1160, Stonewall, Manitoba
R0C 2Z0
tel (204)467-3000
fax (204)467-9028
toll-free 1(800)665-DUCK

Please direct your inquiries to the following:

Eastern Region

Atlantic: Kelly MacDonald
Quebec: Bernard Filion
Ontario: Lynette Mader

Western Region

Prairie-Western Boreal: Marci Dube
British Columbia: Wendy Thatcher

Flyway production staff

Director of Communications and Marketing:
Madeleine Arbez
Editor: Duncan Morrison
Assistant: Deb Menard
Art Director: Tye Gregg
Graphic Designers: Lindsay Pikta-Marie,
Aquila Samson, Jeope Wolfe

© Ducks Unlimited Canada, 2009
Printed in Canada on 100% recycled paper
including 100% post-consumer fibres



Buttertubs Marsh

Area Contacts

Director of Regional Operations
Ian Barnett, Edmonton (780) 602-3221

Manager of Provincial Operations and
Development Manager
Les Bogdan, Surrey (604) 592-5000

Manager of Conservation Programs
Brad Arner, Kamloops (250) 374-8307

Marketing and Communications
Wendy Thatcher, Surrey (604) 592-5004

Fundraising
Rory Brown, Victoria (250) 652-5090