



# Wild Days 2016

## Program Report

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SLSS Education & Communication Team

September 2016



**Wild Days!** sponsored by the Slocan Lake Stewardship Society (SLSS) are free family nature walks held at various locations throughout the Slocan Lake watershed. In August 2016, three *Wild Days!* took families and community members out in the watershed for fun outdoor adventure and environmental learning. The 3-hour long programs encourage participants to explore and make sense of some of the small, wondrous creatures as well as large, spectacular features that surround our communities in the north Slocan Valley.

### Event Highlights

**Saturday, August 6, 9 am-12 pm. *Lakeshore Labyrinth***

Took place along the Hills lakeshore and rail trail with cool, fun facts about geology, insects and other little creatures, and plants from local experts Richard Johnson, Daniel Hellyer, and Marcy Mahr. **Participants: 47**

**Saturday, August 13, 9 am-12 pm. *Creatures - Big and Small***

Explored the Bear and Fish lakes pass and discovered fascinating habits of bears, toads, insects, and plants from local scientists Wayne McCrory, Daniel Hellyer, and Marcy Mahr.

**Participants: 51**

**Saturday, August 20, 9 am-12 pm. *Mysteries of the Not So Deep***

Unraveled the mysteries of aquatic insects, ecology, and riparian habitat at Springer Creek in Slocan led by Shanoon Bennett and Marcy Mahr.

**Participants: 22**

### Program Stats

Five local naturalists and scientists led the tours: Richard Johnson, Daniel Hellyer, Wayne McCrory, Shanoon Bennett, and Marcy Mahr representing a broad range of scientific disciplines that infused interesting natural wonders into each event.

The numbers of participants **totaled 120 people!**

	08/06/16	08/13/16	08/20/16
Adult	26	31	10
Child	16	15	8
Expert	2	2	1
Staff	2	2	2
Volunteer	1	1	1

Total	47	51	22
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There were several participants who came to 2 of the 3 field trips, and a couple of families who were there for all of them. One family traveled twice from Vernon so they could attend.

## Communication Highlights

### Print Media: Ads, articles and announcements

- Save the Date - Ad and article published in Valley Voice - July 13?
- Save the Date announcement published in 358-Exchange - July 5
- Wild Days colour ad with photos and dates - July 27
- Photo of Wild Days event at Fish Lake published in Valley Voice - August 24

### Marketing Collateral

- Posters - 15 8.5 x 14" colour posters were printed to be distributed in New Denver, Silverton, Crescent Valley, Slocan, Hills, Rosebery, and Nakusp.
- Leaflets: 180 leaflets printed to handout at the Friday Market. Initially, we printed only 60 but ran out quickly. Second printing, another 60 leaflets. Third set of printing, 60 more!
- Field Journals: Three journals: Lakeshore, Wetlands, and Rivers were created. We were lucky enough to snag local artist Donna Hicks to draw a more detailed watershed sketch in the field journal. Not only did the general look of the journal improve, kids and adults were also able to quickly identify the different watershed characteristics. She also added simple flora and fauna drawings with prompts such as "I saw..." and "I learned" to encourage children to think about the new things they learned and what they observed during the walk. We printed 50 Lakeshore journals, and 25 each of Wetlands and Rivers journals. These are great educational tools and any remaining journals can be given to children at the SLSS community events or display booth at the Friday Market.

### Social Media and Email Distribution

- FaceBook: 4 posts - 1 Save the Dates and 3 reminders before each event. These posts were shared to at least 8 other FaceBook accounts/groups, which reaches other people beyond members of the ND & Area Community Bulletin Board.
- Email reminders: 3 email reminders to Theresa's local email network (over 60 email addresses) before each event, encouraging others to forward the email to their own network to spread the word.
- Email invitations: Sent to New Denver, Slocan, and Silverton Mayors and Councillors.

### Free Local Advertising

With a smaller advertising budget this year, Theresa utilized some free local advertising.

- EZ Rock: Local radio station EZ Rock published a blurb about Wild Days on their Community Events website.

- Pennywise Editorials published the Wild Days article online and print media early August 9-20 reaching Nelson, Kaslo and Slocan Valley: <https://www.pennywiseads.com/editorial/2016/08/280673/wild-days-returns>

### Websites:

- Slocan Lake Stewardship Society - Having access to the SLSS website admin, Theresa was able to post details about Wild Days and the poster on the front page of the SLSS website.
- Village of New Denver - The Village posted our article and poster on their website and community calendar.
- SWAMP website - The poster was published on the SWAMP website by Darcie Quammie.

### Feedback

- Andrea brought her two children to all the Wild Days and used the walks as part of her children's home-school learning.
- In general, the attendees we talked to said it was a great idea, and a nice summer activity for families.
- Families with young children said they had lots of fun and learned new things.
- One resident said she loved that this was available to residents and visitors alike. She also said that although she lives in the area year-round, it was her first time at Fish Lake and seeing the toads for the first time. So Wild Days events are getting locals to discover their own 'backyard'.
- One visitor from California was here visiting her friend in New Denver. She **said** that she enjoyed the natural environment as there's not much of it where she lives. She also enjoyed learning about the bears and plants during the walk.
- All of the kids seemed to really appreciate that there was a prize, and that the prize was so cool and relevant to what they were learning.

### Recommendations

#### Logistics

- Recommend organizing 3 days in August 2017 - the combination of locations / themes / and timing worked out really well.
- Recommend keeping the 9am to 12pm schedule on Saturday mornings - with time and tradition we hope this will become known as *Wild Days* time.
  - Although we speculated about offering the programs on a different day of the week or later on Saturday mornings, there just doesn't seem to be an ideal time for everyone during the summer. Saturdays do seem to be the best days for families. The programs have been lasting 3 hours so there's a risk if we shorten them, for example, 10am to 12pm, that we will feel rushed in "exploring". We could push the start time to 9:30am and go to 12:30pm ... however straddling the lunch-time noon hour might not work for families with smaller children. (Something to keep pondering).

- Co-sponsorship with other local organizations helped spread the word and deepen collaboration for building local capacity for community-based environmental education.

### Registration

- At 51 participants, the second event at Fish Lake was the most well-attended, and perhaps the group more diverse in age groups and interests. Because of the larger group, it was a little difficult in hearing some of the scientists.
  - Possible solutions to
    - Form smaller groups and have scientists in different “stations” along the trail and each group have 15-20 minutes in each station before they walk to the next one. This can be arranged by the Education Specialist as Plan B for any programs that we think could be >45 people.
    - Pre-registration and capping events might be desirable if in 2017 we see the popularity of *Wild Days* continues to grow. Given the appeal for parents of young families, it ~~is~~ seems problematic in the summer for families to make commitments. This could mean pre-registration numbers might not be accurate and by enforcing a limit we may unnecessarily exclude people. (Something to keep pondering).

### Education Materials

- The Field Journal is a great learning tool and should be re-designed for 2017. Early consultation with Donna Hicks and development of a new journal in late June- early July would be ideal. The themes of Lakeshore, Wetlands and Rivers would also need reconsidering if 2017 themes are different.

### Locations

- Soliciting ideas and pre-planning for 2017 locations to visit would be ideal, for example, Bannack Point, Fenominal Fen in Hills, and below the Bluffs, are some interesting places that come to mind.