

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN STEWARDSHIP NEWS

SUMMER 2016

Attracting Native Pollinators is as Easy as 1-2-3

Article by Alyson Skinner

Insect pollinators, including bees, butterflies, beetles and flies, are responsible for one in every three bites we take. In addition to pollinating food plants, many native pollinators also control unwanted pests and improve soil quality.

Whenever possible, don't use pesticides! Most pesticides are non-selective and may actually harm the beneficial insects you are trying to attract.



1 Diversity! Plant diverse colours and shapes of plants and plants that flower throughout the growing season.

2 Plant flowers in clumps. This will reduce the distance that pollinators need to travel in order to gather pollen and nectar.

3 Enhance habitat. Not only do pollinators require flowers for pollen and nectar, pollinators benefit from additions to the landscape such as shallow water baths for drinking.



Living in Nature Series

Attracting Pollinators

Do you dream of having or have a garden, flower pots or orchard that you want to see succeed? One very important step should be to attract pollinators, like birds, bees and flies - get these creatures working for you! Here are some tips on inviting them to your neighbourhood!

What is a pollinator?
A pollinator is the agent responsible for plant reproduction transferring pollen from plant to plant. Almost 90% of flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce. In B.C., pollinators can be any of variety of creatures, including insects such as bees, flies, beetles, butterflies and birds, but the vast majority of pollinators are bees!



To learn more about how to attract pollinators to your property, including a list of native plants and where you can purchase them locally, check out our new Living in Nature Series Guide, available on our website at www.osstewardship.ca

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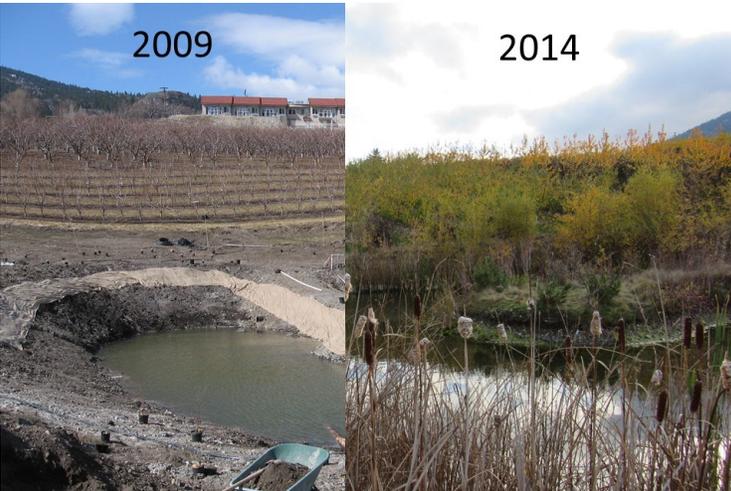
Before and After...

Article by Lia McKinnon and Alyson Skinner

The Okanagan is widely one of Canada's three most endangered ecosystems. Home to over 60 wildlife species at risk of extinction, stewardship and restoration of important habitats is critical. Natural areas and plants work like sponges, cleaning and filtering water and providing other services like flood control, cooling water for fish and they also provide homes and food for birds and other wildlife. Restoring habitat increases biodiversity while reducing your carbon footprint. Enhancing and restoring natural areas usually takes years of consistent maintenance, especially in the dry interior, but sometimes the results are visible fairly quickly.

Habitat Loss
87% of riparian areas,
92% of grasslands, and
70% of antelope-brush
have been lost to urban and agricultural development in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys.

Kambo Pond, Osoyoos



In 2009, Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship partnered with landowners Ranbir and Shinder Kambo to excavate a pond in a frost-pocket on their Osoyoos orchard. Water in the pond helps to regulate temperature and late frosts while also providing valuable wildlife habitat.

Radies Pond, Vernon



In the fall of 2015, Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship and partners worked with Wayne and Wendie Radies to excavate a wetland on their Vernon property. The pond was holding water after first rain and has already become habitat for waterfowl, amphibians and numerous other wildlife.

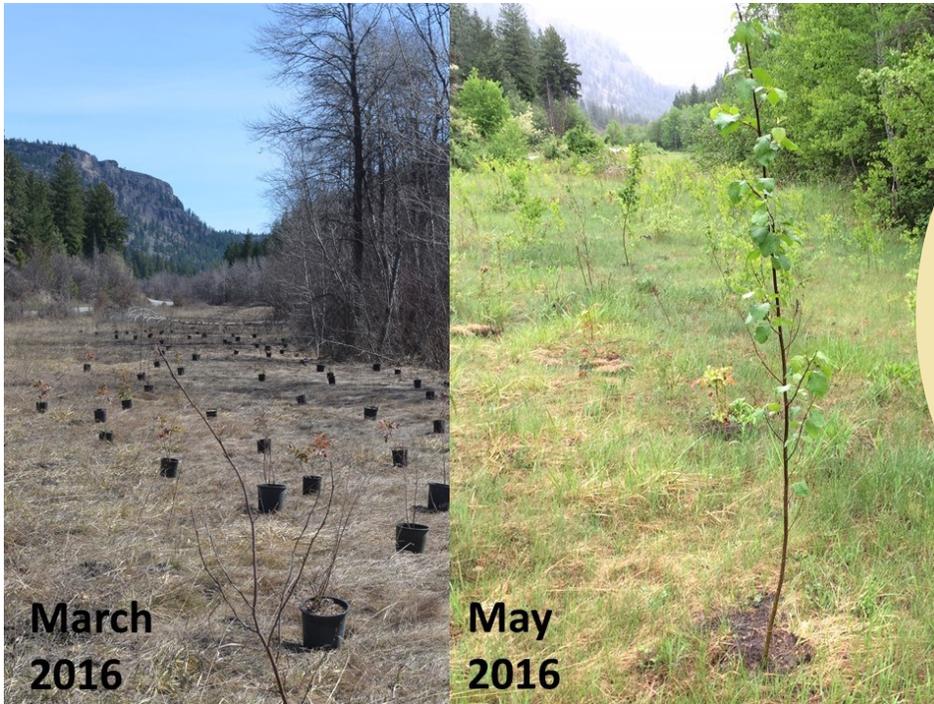
Ellis Basin, Penticton



Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship has worked with several community partners to enhance the riparian buffer along Ellis Basin with hundreds of native plants.

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Okanagan Crush Pad Restoration, Summerland



Want to be a part of projects like these? Volunteer with us! Visit our website at www.osstewardship.ca to learn about upcoming opportunities!

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship is partnering with the Okanagan Crush Pad Winery to restore a seven acre hay field to a riparian forest and wetland complex. Eneas Creek runs through this property right beside the old hayfield. After obtaining a development permit through the District of Summerland, the first step of this ambitious project involved planting 500 native trees and shrubs in a narrow pan handle of the property. These plants are right at home in this habitat and are already providing habitat for wildlife. The next step for this property will be to create some open water wetlands, surrounded by cattails, and more trees and shrubs. Once completed this project will provide habitat many different species of wildlife, including deer and moose, spadefoots, and western screech-owls.



Want help with habitat restoration on your property?

Become a Wildlife Habitat Steward!

Stewards receive technical assistance from our experienced restoration ecologists. Often, OSS can apply for funding to purchase native plants and seed for such projects.

To become a Wildlife Habitat Steward, contact us at info@osstewardship.ca

Okanagan Bat Update

Article submitted by Margaret Holm, Okanagan Community Bat Project

After a bat with the debilitating White Nose Syndrome fungus was found near Seattle in March, Okanagan residents were asked to report dead bats found in April. The disease does not effect humans only bats hibernating in colonies, and is estimated to have killed six million bats in eastern North America since 2006. It was thought that bats newly returned from hibernation might show symptoms of the disease. Over two dozen dead bats from southern British Columbia were turned in and examined. Although some bats exhibited skin conditions with patches of white skin, none had the deadly White Nose Syndrome fungus. This is good news for B.C. bats. Bats prey exclusively on insects and save the forestry and agricultural industries millions of dollars in pest control. They also prey on mosquitoes and other pesky summer insects.

One of Canada's most common bats, the Little Brown Myotis, is also one of the bats susceptible to White Nose Syndrome. It is found in many different habitats and often uses buildings for summer roosts. Although Little Brown bat populations do not appear to be affected this year, bat biologists fear that the fungal disease may impact local bats in the coming years. The public's help is sought to report summer bat colonies so that the BC Community Bat Program can keep track of local populations. The Okanagan has 14 of the 16 species of bat found in BC, making it spot for bats with more bat diversity here than in any other region in Canada.

Check out www.bcbats.ca for tips on attracting bats or managing bats in buildings. Landowners are encouraged to install bat boxes in cases where bats are being excluded from buildings. To report a bat roost or for more information on bats contact Okanagan@bcbats.ca or call 1-855922-2287 ext. 13.



To learn more about bats and how to install bat boxes on your property, check out our new Living in Nature Series Guide available on our website at www.osstewardship.ca



Caring for Cormack Marsh

Article by Alyson Skinner

For our third consecutive year, Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship partnered with the community in Princeton at Cormack Marsh. This year, in addition to planting 150 native wild rose and red osier dogwood plants, students and community members also constructed a trail from the Kettle Valley Rail Trail to the pond and installed a kiosk with local artwork and an interpretive sign. Many thanks to the incredible volunteers who have helped to green up Cormack Marsh.

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