



GOLDEN BRANCH UPDATE

2017



GOLDEN TRAILS: PROTECTING OUR ECOSYSTEMS

With the generous support of Mountain Equipment Co-op, Wildsight Golden will be hosting workshops this year on ecologically sustainable trail development in the greater Golden area. With increasing interest in backcountry travel from residents and visitors alike, we need to carefully consider our collective impacts on the landscape. We all want to protect wildlife and their habitat, not to mention the natural beauty that makes living in the Columbia Valley so spectacular.

Trails can give us access to special places for exercise, fishing, berry picking or simply adventure and fun through exploration. Trails can also cause direct disturbance to wildlife, increase erosion of soils and sediment in streams, spread invasive plant species and contribute to water and air pollution. All types of recreational activities can be harmful if we head outside carelessly. Wetland and

alpine flora and fauna are especially vulnerable and can take a very long time to recover.

Wolverines, grizzly bears and other wildlife need large areas of relatively undisturbed habitat to survive. We need to leave space for wildlife to move up and down the valley to maintain healthy populations. Networks of trails add to the many other ways in which people transform the landscape including highways, railroads, buildings, forestry and mining. Too much human infrastructure and activity and our sensitive species start to disappear.

Wildsight Golden looks forward to working with local and regional government and recreational user groups in the region. Together, we can develop an ecologically-appropriate trail network strategy based on sound research and practical solutions.

COLUMBIA WETLANDS WATERBIRD SURVEY



The Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey recently completed its third spring bird count. It was more successful than ever thanks to 83 dedicated volunteers who counted 27,000 birds at 100 different survey sites! The highest counts this spring were 2,426 American coots and 1,820 mallards. Other notable counts were 402 swans and 456 common mergansers. This spring we also brought 58 school-aged kids outside for birding field trips. Our overarching goal is that the Columbia Wetlands will be designated an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area based on our data. Fall survey dates are Sept. 29, Oct. 5 and 15, with free training sessions in September. To participate, contact racheldarvill@gmail.com or call 250-344-5530.

GET WILD! SUMMER DAY CAMP



Summer is all about playing outside and Get Wild! day camp gives kids every opportunity to do just that. For the past three summers, we have had many adventures in the valley, visiting the birds, the bears and the wild rivers. Some days start with gardening and on many afternoons we end up getting wet and dirty at Confluence Park, but every day is a unique adventure. Kids can't help but learn when they are freely exploring natural places! The camp prides itself on inquiry-based environmental education with plenty of creative, active activities. We have affordable weekly sign-ups in July and August—but book soon as they are already filling up. Contact Camp Coordinator Madeline at getwildcamp@gmail.com to register.

BOATING WITH CARE IN THE COLUMBIA WETLANDS



If you're heading out on the water this year, be aware of the new boating regulations along the Columbia River between Fairmont Hot Springs and Donald, excluding Columbia and Windermere Lakes. The Columbia Wetlands, one of North America's largest remaining intact wetlands, are critical for feeding and resting migrating birds.

We can all do our part to minimize disturbance to the wetlands by respecting boating regulations. All side channels and sloughs are off limits to motorized watercraft, year round. Kayakers and canoers: please take care not to disturb water birds during nesting season (April to June). On the main channel, motorized vessels are limited to 20 horsepower or less. No towing of any kind is allowed.

JOIN US

Wildsight Golden's main objective is to work to maintain biodiversity and healthy human communities in and around the Golden area. If you are interested in volunteering on any of our initiatives or are interested in starting your own, please contact our Branch Coordinator, Anna Urban at golden@wildsight.ca. Also, we'd love to have you as a member so please visit us online or at the Golden Farmers Market to register!

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