

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon



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APRIL IS ENVIRONMENTAL MONTH

Happy Birthday		Happy Anniversary	
Apr. 28	Peter Boekhorst	May 2	Claire Viktora

Upcoming Speakers:

Apr. 28	Claire Viktora and team Trip to Ecuador	May 5	Kim Boekhorst Friends in Need Food Bank	May 12	
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LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Alex Pope** presided.

Guests

Greta Borick-Cunningham – Executive Director of ARMS



Kristen Munk – Watershed Project Manager at ARMS



Program: Beavers in BC – speaker: **Kristen Munk**

About Kristen:

Kristen began working with ARMS in early 2024. Born in a small town outside of Vancouver, Kristen grew up exploring the outdoors, which developed into a deep passion for the Pacific Northwest and the wildlife that call it home. Before studying Biology and Environmental Science at university, she backpacked through Southeast Asia learning about other cultures and environments. Once she returned home, she wanted to share her passion for environmental conservation through advocacy her passion for ecological restoration and indigenous reconciliation.

Kristen's Presentation (in summary)



A brief history of beavers: Beavers are native to North America (*Castor canadensis*), and were once abundant across nearly all watersheds. Prior to 1600, the beaver population was estimated at 60 – 400 million animals. During the 1600s – 1800s, they were heavily trapped during the first trade and nearly wiped out in many regions by the late 1800s. Fortunately, beavers recovered through conservation laws and reintroduction efforts. Beavers have now been re-established across much of their historic range. Increasingly, they are now found in both rural and urban watersheds. 400 years ago, beavers were hunted to extinction in the United Kingdom. They were reintroduced there in 2008, resulting in an astonishing improvement to the ecosystem that beavers bring.

Beaver family structure: Beavers live in family groups called colonies. Breeding pairs are monogamous, and the kits are born in spring. Yearlings help raise their younger siblings, and the young disperse from their family at about two years old. If one adult is removed, the net disrupts the entire colony. Vacant territories are often quickly recolonized. Telling the difference between male and female beavers is difficult because they are monomorphic, meaning that they look identical on the outside, and both sexes are similar in size.

Beaver behaviour: Beavers respond to the sound of running water. Fall food caching increases cutting of trees. Beavers are primarily nocturnal, and are highly territorial. They felled trees for food and construction. Tree cutting is survival behaviour, not random destruction. Beavers do not hibernate. They can stay submerged for 15 minutes, and use their tails to slap the water, alerting of danger. They prefer to eat deciduous species (Willow, cottonwood, and alder trees).

Beavers are environmental engineers: Beavers create wetlands by building dams, thereby slowing water flow and reducing erosion. They also improve water quality, increase habitat complexity, and support fish, amphibians, birds and invertebrates. They provide climate resilience through water storage, and create valuable rearing habitat for juvenile salmon.

Urban conflicts: The building a beaver dams often results in the flooding of trails, roads, and yards in urban areas; and the blockage of culverts and the loss of trees. This results in a perception of risk to existing infrastructure. But trapping or otherwise killing the animals is not a long-term solution. This only creates vacant territory, and new beavers quickly recolonize. In addition, trapping of beavers disrupts stable family units, and relocated beavers lack habitat and food caches. This results in an increased risk of starvation and predation. It is not only costly and repetitive, but also removes important ecological benefits that beavers provide.

Working with beavers instead of against them: There are several coexistence strategies that can be implemented. For example, tree protection (caging), by wrapping high-value trees with galvanized wire mesh to a minimum of 3 to 4 feet high, and leave space between the cage and the tree trunk. When doing so, priority can be given to culturally and structurally important trees. This is a simple humane and effective solution. A second coexistence strategy is to install pond levellers (flow devices) made of plastic pipes that are installed through dams or culverts, which regulate water height without removing the dam. This reduces flooding risk and maintains the wetland habitat for the beaver. It is a long-term preventable solution. A third coexistence strategy is to put culvert protection fencing in front of the culverts. This lets the water through, but prevents the beaver from getting entrance to the culvert, and prevents damming by the beavers at the infrastructure pinch points. It allows for maintaining water flow, reduces maintenance costs, and supports coexistence of the beaver with the environment. A case study resulted in the implementation of this approach, on 126 Avenue in Maple Ridge. Initial concerns of residents were trees being cut down and rising water levels. This resulted in community frustration and calls for trapping of the beavers. Instead, they implemented, as a trial run, a shift from "beaver removal" to "coexistence strategy": pipes were installed to regulate water levels. High-value trees were protected with wire mesh caging. Flooding was reduced and trees were protected. This resulted in beavers remaining, and ecosystem benefits were maintained.

Happy and Sad Dollars included:

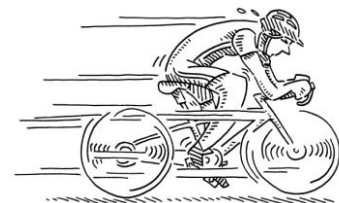
Lynda - Happy that it is only 3 more weeks to **2026 WineFest**, and only about 25 tickets left to sell!!!

Just looking for Silent Auction donations...and a Pizza Restaurant to match up with our Beer Vendor!!!

Mark Forster - He liked our Beaver presentation today.... but he experienced a beaver trick in his backyard, with a tree falling next door, directly on his fence. The city cut the tree, but left all the wood for Mark to clean up.... not so happy about that!



Alex - Happy he met with the President of the Royal City Rotary Club (New Westminster), apparently a bicycle enthusiast (just like Alex) a club visit may be in the future!



Club Announcements

- April 24th – Wine Festival Meeting at 10:30 am (via Zoom)
- 2026-2027 Executive Planning Meeting –
Friday April 24 @ 5pm at Eric’s home
- April 30 – Pub Hub – location TBA
- May 1-3 District Conf @ Harrison Hot Springs

President’s Closing Quote:



So I picked up a dozen cinnamon rolls at the bakery this morning.

Submitted by Laurie Anderson