THE HARLEQUIN

VFFN NEWSLETTER—SPRING EDITION—2019

Photo: Anna Ockenden, VFFN member

There is an old cliche, “Better late than never”; and this is certainly true in this case. Before I knew, it was summer; and spring, although not spectacular, but more sunshine than in June, was not such a bad season. We are certainly hoping for the best in 2020.

EVENING PRESENTATIONS

DATE: MARCH 12, 2019
TOPIC: VIDEO—EARTH, WIND, FIRE, & WATER
PRESENTER: JANICE STRONG—who made the video

Speaker # 3 for March failed to show up due to weather conditions. Instead we watched a video entitled EARTH, WIND, FIRE, & WATER done by Janice Strong and her husband. The photography was outstanding; the commentary extremely interesting, and the topics very appropriate.

Due to time constrains we only viewed 3 sections and omitted the one on water. Number 1 dealt with our place in the Galaxy— Mountains to Sand, Coral-Reef to Limestone, and Mud to Shale and Granite.

Number 2 concerned Wind. It described weather, microbes, lichen, trees, and forests.

Number 3 concentrated on volcanoes, grasslands, insects, birds, and animals.

There is much to learn from this video and it is worthwhile seeing it again.

A small gathering of 11 people certainly indicated that the evening had been rewarding and worthwhile.

DATE: April 9, 2019
SPEAKER: Doug Wahl
TOPIC: Forest Practices Board (FPB)

This was an interesting topic mainly because no one had ever heard of this department, and yet it provides an avenue for the ordinary citizen to be actively involved in what happens in a forest district. If there are concerns these are the people that can give assistance. Wow! Imagine that! A government agency that actually cares. This office is the watch dog for the public. However, it was stressed that it is always best to be diplomatic with the organization on whose "toes" you might step on.

What does the FPB do?
- It must do audits and complaints.
- It may do special investigations, special reports & appeals.

What do the resource managers do?
- They ensure practices sustain ecological, economic & social values.
- In order to achieve this they need more power to protect wildlife and do monitoring.

What is being done?

1. Wildlife / species @ risk
   - There is no widespread planning.
   - Only species on FRPA (Forest Range Protection Act) get protection through wildlife habitat.
   - Only 76 species are listed, and the list has not been updated for 13 years.
   - The government can dictate wildlife habitat for no more than 1% of a harvested area.
   - There is little monitoring of implementation of legal orders.

BC is the only province in Canada with no species at risk legislation.

2. Goshawks
   - Is a species at risk
   - It is governed by BMP (Best Management Practice).
   - There is no monitoring by government.
   - Despite management practices, goshawks are still in decline.
   - There are no recovery plans.

3. Practices
   - Salvage logging encroaches on habitats.
   - Construction of roads impact on fish and grizzly bear habitat.

4. Climate Change
   - Forest Health is affected; insect and diseases result in tree mortality.
   - Invasive plant species changed species composition & forage quality.
   - Changing growing conditions has challenged forest regeneration and range health.
   - There is increased frequency & intensity of wildfires.
   - Forest hydrology (water quality, quantity, etc.) is affected.

Public Involvement
A company must have a forest stewardship plan. Any citizen can ask to see this plan and make his / her concerns known.

Overall, what Mr. Wahl had to say was very interesting.

DATE: May 14, 2019
SPEAKER: Bob Handfield
TOPIC: Geology of Western US National Parks

Bob Handfield is the President of the South Okanagan Naturalist Club whose main area of expertise is geology. He did his PhD at Princeton University and taught at one of the University in southern US. However, as he admitted he went to the dark side and switched from education to the oil fields.

Whilst a university professor, he took a group of students on a road trip that concentrated on the geology of the western national parks. It gave the students an opportunity to do their homework whilst having fun!

Through the magic of a slide show we viewed some magnificent vistas. The geology of these areas can be explain but to truly appreciate the traumas that mother earth has endured is best experienced by visiting these areas. However, there is no comparison between then and now. The numbers of visitors to these sites, especially the Grand Canyon, has resulted in restrictions; and now like everywhere else, we take a number and wait our turn.

Twist Trees—report by John Henry

As with many natural phenomena, a lack of a definitive explanation provides fertile ground for speculation, and theories abound as to why some trees take on this curious growth form. A couple of likely reasons are:

Spiral growth is beloved by photographers for the beautiful curves to be found in the bark and wood of the trees. Sawmills, on the other hand, are not so pleased to see a spiral-grained log in their yard; the wood is often weaker and spiral-grained boards often twist as they dry. Despite the reduction in the raw strength of the wood itself, spiral growth gives a tree greater flexibility than its straight-grained neighbours, making the tree more resistant to high winds or heavy snow loads.

Another possible cause for spiral grain is to better distribute water around the tree. In straight-grained trees, the needles (or leaves, though spiral growth is more common in conifers) share water, photosynthate, and nutrients with the roots directly below them. If the roots or branches were to be damaged on one side of a straight-grained tree, the corresponding roots and branches would wither. A spiral grain, on the other hand, allows resource sharing all around the tree, distributing water from a single root to branches all around the tree, and sugars made in the leaves on a single branch to all the roots. By distributing water and nutrients evenly, a spiral-grained tree can more easily survive periods of drought or windstorms, as well as the chronic stresses of growing in dry, windy areas. Unsurprisingly, spiral grained-trees are often found on dry ridge tops where the twin forces of exposure and dessication are at their greatest. Bristlecone pine in particular, famous both for its longevity and for its habitat high on the windswept Sierras, often exhibits spiral growth.

A few other theories involve genetics, heliotropism (tracking the sun), the Coriolis effect (which causes the clockwise pattern of winds and ocean currents in the northern hemisphere, and mechanical torque from prevailing winds. What do you think?

Tags: heliotropism, spiral grained-trees, Spiral growth, straight-grained trees, wood flexibility

ed. note: John search the internet for his information and the photo is also taken from the internet. I thought that I had taken a photo but I hadn't.

Have you satisfied a natural curiosity? Share the information with us. All contributions are welcome. Send to mhmasiel@gmail.com