

Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2006



Present were: Jerry Azevedo, Louise Decario, Mike Hoebel, Libby McClelland, Brian Mitchell, Pearl Roberts.

Hushed and with mouths slightly agape in awe, we took in the sumptuous surroundings of Brian's suite at the Woodstone. Coffee and tea were set on the table, and a plate of cookies magically replenished itself, a latter-day miracle. Louise borrowed a pillow, or was it two? Libby took the whole bed. Distracted by the view, unaccustomed to the overstuffed chairs, and feeling somehow unworthy of all this luxury, the Naturalists got straight to business...

1. "Species of the Month" project: Pam has submitted her article on talkative ravens for the February issue. For March, Jerry reported that Odin had offered to write on invasives. Then someone reminded him that Dick was writing about invasives this spring, and Jerry, obviously flustered, started stammering some nonsense until someone saved him with the comment that surely there are more than enough invasives on this island to go around. We decided to let Dick and Odin work it out, man to man.
2. "Galiano's Natural Areas Brochure" project: With the flourish of a practiced magician, Pearl pulled out a new version of the brochure and spread it on the table (Jerry took the cookies off to the side for protection), and there were many oh's and ah's. Yet the group has been squabbling about the color green for so many months that it's become a habit. Fortunately, Pearl anticipated the group neurosis and pulled out a color chart and then sat back and watched with bemusement as everyone pointed to this green and that green before deciding on this one, but maybe that one. Pearl said she'd take care of it. But that wasn't the end of it. We had to wrangle over the photo of Dionisio and about showing more protected areas and what about the community forest and why do we have to point out so many blasted shore accesses. To move things along, Pearl folded the brochure back into her briefcase, and Jerry pushed the plate of cookies out to the center of the table as a distraction.
3. Bird stuff: Mike was only too happy to talk about the Christmas bird count (this was the one for 2005; he'll start talking about the one for 2006 next month). He too had visual aids: an elaborate table of number of birds by species over the last 12 years, sadly without illustrations and nowhere near as colorful as the brochure but impressive nonetheless. The results, for those not able to attend the meeting, are posted on the website. Mike called our attention to the lack of siskins this year, and he pointed out that there was a sighting of one vulture, a timid fellow who didn't have the gumption to cross the Strait of Juan de Fuca with his fellows in the fall and so must hang around Galiano and shiver while the others are down basking in the sun. Then a couple of us whined about not being able to distinguish the various gulls, and Mike pacified the group by hinting that he might be willing to host a gull tune-up sometime.
4. A new Naturalists' project: Now that Galiano has its own circle in the Audubon Christmas bird count, Mike thinks we also need our own bird checklist, and he brought out the Salt Spring checklist as an example. That move was a tactical error. Salt Spring? Surely we could do a much better job than this slightly scruffy affair put out on Salt Spring. Folks started waving their hands to show a bigger and better checklist. We could have illustrations. We could have

frequency charts. And which green should we use? But, but, Mike sputtered, it has to come out this spring. Spring, 2006? someone clarified. Mike nodded. Everyone laughed.

5. Another new Naturalists' project: Jerry is fascinated by moss, he says. Everyone else nodded sympathetically, knowing he lives alone. What about a moss festival? he asked. Everyone nodded. What will you serve for lunch? Pearl asked sardonically. Moss on toast? Yes, the meeting was running long, and people were getting punchy. Mike tactfully suggested a scaled down moss festival. He knows this guy, one Terry Taylor, who knows a thing or two about mosses, and he might be persuaded to come over and give a moss lecture and a moss walk, as long as we fed him something other than moss on toast.
6. Next meeting time and place: MONDAY, February 13th at 1 PM, Activity Center (sigh).

Their business done yet somehow hesitant to leave, the Naturalists commented on the loss of the eagle nest at Dionisio, the tree snapping in the wind sometime before the 31st. Then Pearl reminisced about how when she sees several eagles in a bare-branched tree, she thinks they look like Christmas ornaments, with those white heads. Then we woke Libby, who was snoring on the bed, and made our way down the stairs, looking back wistfully at the thick carpets, the overstuffed chairs, the plate of cookies.

Corrections and comments to:

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