

## **Mildred Wardlaw Nature Trails**

The Mildred Wardlaw Nature trails, located near the beginning of the Nordic Cross- Country ski trails at McCulloch Lake, were named after Mildred Wardlaw, a long-time resident of the McCulloch area. The trails are a co-operative project of CONC, the Nordic Cross Country Ski Club, the Ministry of Forests, the FBCN Foundation and the T. D. Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation.

The Mildred Wardlaw Nature Trails were developed at the McCulloch Nordic Cross- Country Ski Trails to utilize part of this area in the off-ski season. Two of the trails were named for Mildred Wardlaw, daughter of Dave Wardlaw who was employed by the water district to control the water outlet on McCulloch Lake. Mildred continued his tradition while living on the nearby family ranch. She recorded basic daily weather data and still found time to get to know the flowers and birds in the area. She was also an artist. Mildred died in 1995.

The extensive cross-country ski and snowshoe trail system has been used for years by hikers, mountain bikers and back country horse riders in the spring, summer and fall months. It seemed a good fit for the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club, many members of which also belong to the Nordic club, to develop a nature trail system for the use of club members, school groups and the general public. In 1997 an educational program began. Identification signs for some of the common flowers, shrubs and trees were developed and placed out next to suitable specimens on the trail every spring and summer to enhance trail user enjoyment and education.

The summer of 2002 saw two major interpretive panels completed; one illustrated the most common birds, the other showed common mammals. The photographs were ably assembled by Harald Hall, mounted, and located in a kiosk near the beginning of the Chickadee trail. Two large panels, one illustrating Mountain Pine Beetle ecology and another displaying the 10 common tree species, were completed in 2006. Future projects: A second kiosk to be set nearer the main cabin and a panel displaying common mammal tracks is proposed for completion in 2007.

The committee welcomes new flower, bird, and mammal sightings and/or suggestions for future development. Thanks to previous committee members Joyce Mervyn, Judy Latta , and Marie Haywood for their contributions as well as that of other CONC members.