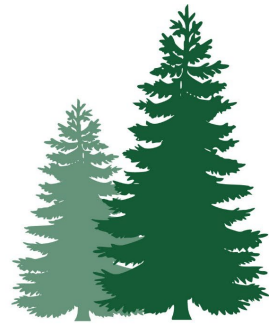




HALL ROAD HERALD

Summer 2026



Editor's Den

By Don Plant

Ever spotted a moose or lynx in the Hall Road neighbourhood?

While deer, coyotes and even bears are common sights at different times of the year, encounters with Great Horned owls, turkey vultures and even cougars can happen. Throw in different species of bats, turtles and migrating songbirds, and you've got a cornucopia of critters to marvel at.



Photo credit Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Bragging to your friends about a rare sighting is one thing. Now, thanks to the work of Hall Roader Justin Enns, you can prove your detective work by photographing an animal and uploading it to a database that anyone can access.

You may have heard about eBird, eFauna and other apps that biologists use to record wild animals and sensitive environments. Now we've got our own. The Hall Road Wildlife Tracker records the date and time of your photo and pins your location through GPS.

Best of all, the software uploads your info to a database that's available to everyone. All you need is your phone and internet access. We can track the animals, nests and shelters our neighbours have photographed and contribute our own images and data.

You can even upload photos you took last winter. Follow the instructions Justin has written in this Herald edition and start "shooting" the wildlife. It's a great way to identify birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals in our park and neighbourhood. And it's a cool way to build a long-lasting database that tracks patterns of their behaviour.

In other news, our committee has learned the Hall Road area is one of the last residential areas in Kelowna without a structure plan. Most areas already have such a plan, which involved city staff consulting with developers and residents before they designed a long-range blueprint that now guides the area's growth.

A structure plan establishes a framework for future housing and land use. It proposes road systems and new infrastructure like sewer to ensure the area evolves sustainably. The soonest we'll get one, city staff tell us, is 2032 – six years from now.

The neighbourhood should remain in its semi-rural state until then. But we can't be complacent. The Hall Road Neighbourhood Association plans to gather as much information as possible to reflect residents' wishes. That means assessing our demographic trends, housing types, roads, transit service, parks and wildlife.

It also means listing our environmentally sensitive areas, like wetlands, ravines, riparian areas and migration routes. The pressure to develop properties will be strong once sewer is available to all of us. Our neighbourhood has plenty of animal habitat, and many residents believe it should be protected.

That tension will build as 2032 approaches. If you haven't already, subscribe to the Herald (hallroad.ca/newsletter) to stay informed. And write us with your own views and questions (info@hallroad.ca). We'd love to hear from you.

New Board Carries On

A team of new and old faces has stepped up to keep the Hall Road area the best neighbourhood in town.

Eight residents were acclaimed at last month's annual general meeting to lead your neighbourhood association for the next two years. While we're sad to see stalwarts like Vanessa Bell, Cliff Serwa, Craig Gronsdahl, Steve Losso and Bruce Stevenson bow out, new members are willing to pick up where their predecessors left off.

We're excited that Blythe Clark, a newcomer to the hood, has offered to take over as treasurer. Brad Rix, a longtime resident, has expressed interest in focusing on FireSmart initiatives. Peter Losso-Kiss, a wunderkind of technology, has stepped up after his dad stepped down. And Bruce Hedmann, our resident birdman and interim chair at our AGMs, has returned to the board after a two-year hiatus.

The remaining directors are Ken Buhler, Dave Bush, Justin Enns and Don Plant. The committee meets later this month to hash out who fills which role. We may circulate the position of president so some of us learn the ropes by taking turns.

If you have any question or issue you'd like to raise, feel free to write us at info@hallroad.ca.

Introducing Hall Road's own Wildlife Tracker

By Justin Enns

A few months ago at a Hall Road board meeting, Don said he wanted some sort of wildlife tracker that enables residents to pull out their phones, snap a photo of an animal, select the species from a list and have the sighting automatically added to a database.

That database could then be submitted to B.C.'s Ministry of Environment to help experts better understand migration patterns and the general movement of wildlife in our area.

I run a small web development company, so I was fairly confident I could build something like that. Months later, when Don brought it up again, I told him I'd build it for him. His persistence finally wore me down!

Over the next month, I tinkered away until I came up with something I really liked. And thus, Kelowna Wildlife Tracker was born.

To use it, go to wildlife.hallroad.ca and enable location services when prompted. (If you have an iPhone and are using Safari, you may need to go to Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services > Safari and allow location access while using the app.) Once enabled, you'll be taken to the map, where you can see wildlife sightings submitted by other people in the neighbourhood.

If you spot wildlife you'd like to log, tap + Log Wildlife Sighting, choose the category (bird, mammal or reptile), search for the species, add a photo if possible, include any relevant notes and save the observation.

You can also upload photos you've taken previously. Simply select the date the photo was taken. If the photo contains GPS data, the app will automatically place the sighting at the correct location. If it doesn't—or if you're not where the photo was taken—tap Change Location on Map and then tap anywhere on the map to move the marker to the correct spot.

Once saved, the sighting goes automatically to the database, which will eventually be shared with the Ministry of Environment.

I added a recent feature after chatting with someone at the AGM. If you have suggestions for improvements, let me know by writing me at justin.enns@hallroad.ca.

And lastly, please use this tracker! It's valuable to know what wildlife are in our area throughout the year, and it's fun to share what's happening in our little-neck of the woods.

New Johnson Park Playground Equipment Update

By Ken Buhler



I'm collaborating again with the City's parks department to replace the Johnson Road playground I created in 1995.

We currently have two swing frames with two bays, each of them having two basket seats and two strap seats against the upper bank (see photo). We'll be getting a new set of swing frames with either three or four bays across the north edge of the play area.

We're also getting a modern, larger climbing frame, a bear-proof garbage bin and a seating bench. If you or anyone you know is willing to build a pre-designed picnic table email me at Ken.Buhler@hallroad.ca. I'll work on finding a sponsor for the materials. We expect construction to begin by this fall.

There will be additional 'No Dogs Allowed' signs for the entire play area, as the current ones are either too small or being ignored. The parks department is encouraging residents to report infractions to the bylaw department at [\(250\) 469-8686](tel:2504698686).

Pine Beetle – It's Back

By Cheryl Farmer

Some of you will remember the serious outbreak of the mountain pine beetle in the mid-1990s. It hit the province hard and since then millions of hectares of trees have been killed. In the Hall Road neighbourhood, many people had to remove their ponderosas.

In the last couple of years, the pine beetle has started another aggressive attack. The beetles are typically killed by very cold winter weather, which historically has kept their numbers in check. But the beetle is surviving these warmer winters.

If you look around the neighbourhood you will see many dead, or dying, ponderosa trees. I spoke with a City official who said pine beetle is on their radar and they are taking steps to try and protect some of the larger ponderosas on public land. I also spoke with a local tree company who said the area around UBCO has been hit hard with hundreds of ponderosas being removed.



The best advice I was offered was to water your trees, especially when it's hot. A dry tree is stressed and a stressed tree is more susceptible to the beetle. Verbenone patches, a pheromone based beetle repellent, was used to deter pine beetle back in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be available anymore in BC. I tried Bylands, Art Knapps, Buckerfields and TerraLink, and none of these businesses could order it.

Mountain pine beetles typically fly to attack new host trees between mid-July and late August, but sometimes their flight extends into September. If you have a dead (or dying) ponderosa on your property, you will need to have it removed asap so the beetles do not infect other trees.

Do not keep the wood for firewood, have the tree company remove the trunk and debris.

For more information on pine beetle infestations, visit

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-health/forest-pests/bark-beetles/mountain-pine-beetle>

Birdsong

By Bruce Hedmann



Photo credit Lessandro Tramonti/Getty Images

On the farm or in rural life, it's mostly roosters that call out early, welcoming us to the new day.

In urban areas, local birds take over that role, filling the morning with their sweet sounds. Birds tend to begin their morning chorus 30 to 60 minutes before sunrise — nature's very own alarm clock. But why do birds sing, vocalize and create such a racket first thing in the morning?

Research doesn't point to a single reason. Both males and females sing to attract a mate during breeding season. But that raises a question: once they're paired, why keep singing?

It turns out there are several compelling explanations. Birds sing to defend their territory. The morning chorus appears to serve as a way to re-establish their territory after a night of inactivity, and to communicate about food sources. There's also the idea that birds sing in the morning simply to "warm up" their voices, much like performers doing vocal exercises before a show.

Birds rise early to take advantage of the low light conditions, which are ideal for vocalizing without cutting into valuable foraging time. A bird singing confidently also signals to others that it is healthy and has survived the dangers of the night.

Since birds rely heavily on their vision to find food and navigate, they are up at first light — hungry and ready. Their morning chorus at this time of year, then, is likely a combination of communicating with the flock, locating food, and perhaps simply delighting in the act of song itself.

Western Painted Turtles

By Risti Lesperance, Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan



Photo credit EECO

A familiar sight to many Hall Roaders is the Western painted turtle, one of the native species found in the pond system at Mission Creek Regional Park.

The turtle gets its name from the red lines on its underside, as if someone painted it with a paintbrush. The top of its shell is a smooth, leathery dark green, the perfect camouflage against the dark emerald of the pond water.

The Western painted turtle has a bright yellow stripe on its head, neck, tail and legs, with webbed hind feet and claws on its front feet. This species prefers the margins and shallows of lakes and ponds for feeding, shelter, hibernation and basking in the sun.

When a pond dries up, this turtle will make its way to another body of water nearby in search of habitat. (So please don't disturb it if you see one crossing the road). During the winter, it will hibernate in the mud at the bottom of the pond, remaining submerged for months and surviving by its stored oxygen supply.

The population is vulnerable in June and July, when females lay their clutch of eggs. A female needs a sandy area upland of the pond where she can dig a small nest to deposit her eggs.

She'll lay 6-18 oval-shaped eggs about the size of a toonie. It's important to stay on designated trails to avoid crushing a nest of eggs. Once hatched, the baby turtles will make their way down to the pond.

The next time you walk past the Hall Road Pond, count how many Western painted turtles you see basking on a log!

Have a Great Summer Everyone!