



2016 *Summer Fun* in the Creston Valley

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Wetlands teeming with activity beneath the surface

Story by: Creston Valley
Wildlife Management Area

When looking at an aerial image of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA), it looks as if there is about one part water for every part of land within its boundaries. That is a lot of water and a whole lot more aquatic life within the large amount of space.

Wetlands are rich in diversity and far more populated than many other ecosystems on Earth. When you take a sample of the water, as many students who visit the CVWMA find out, a whole

world of aquatic life zips, whirls and floats before your eyes.

Did you even realize all these creatures were lurking within the murky waters of the wetland?

Many times the life forms we detect in the water are suited with weird and wonderful adaptations that seem like perfect science fiction material.

Take the leech, for example. This wetland inhabitant not only gets a bad reputation as the number one reason humans rarely go swimming within the tepid waters, it also has some really interesting body parts that cater to its irksome characteristics.

The first adaptation that really helps this lowly bloodsucker is its ability to

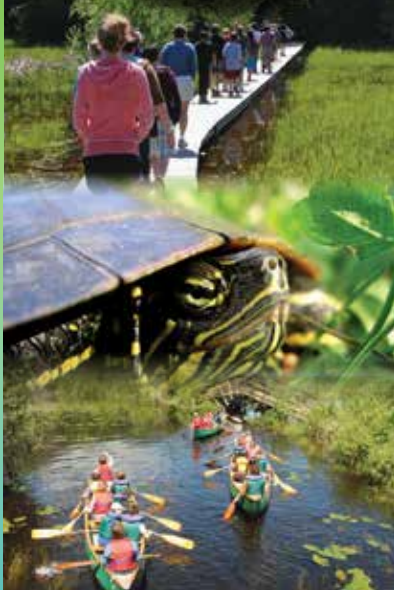
attach to its prey. Each end happens to be fitted with its own suction device. That's right; this stretchy, segmented relative of the earthworm has a sucker on the anterior (head) end and posterior (back) end, helping it really hang on for bloodsucking bliss.

In addition, the mouth has an anesthetic for undetectable feeding and an anticoagulant that stops the blood from clotting. This allows the leech to drink its fill undetected, with blood flowing into its body like a faucet on full blast.

Every insect living below the water has some sort of mind-bending adaptation that suits it just right. Take the water scorpion and mosquito larvae, for instance.



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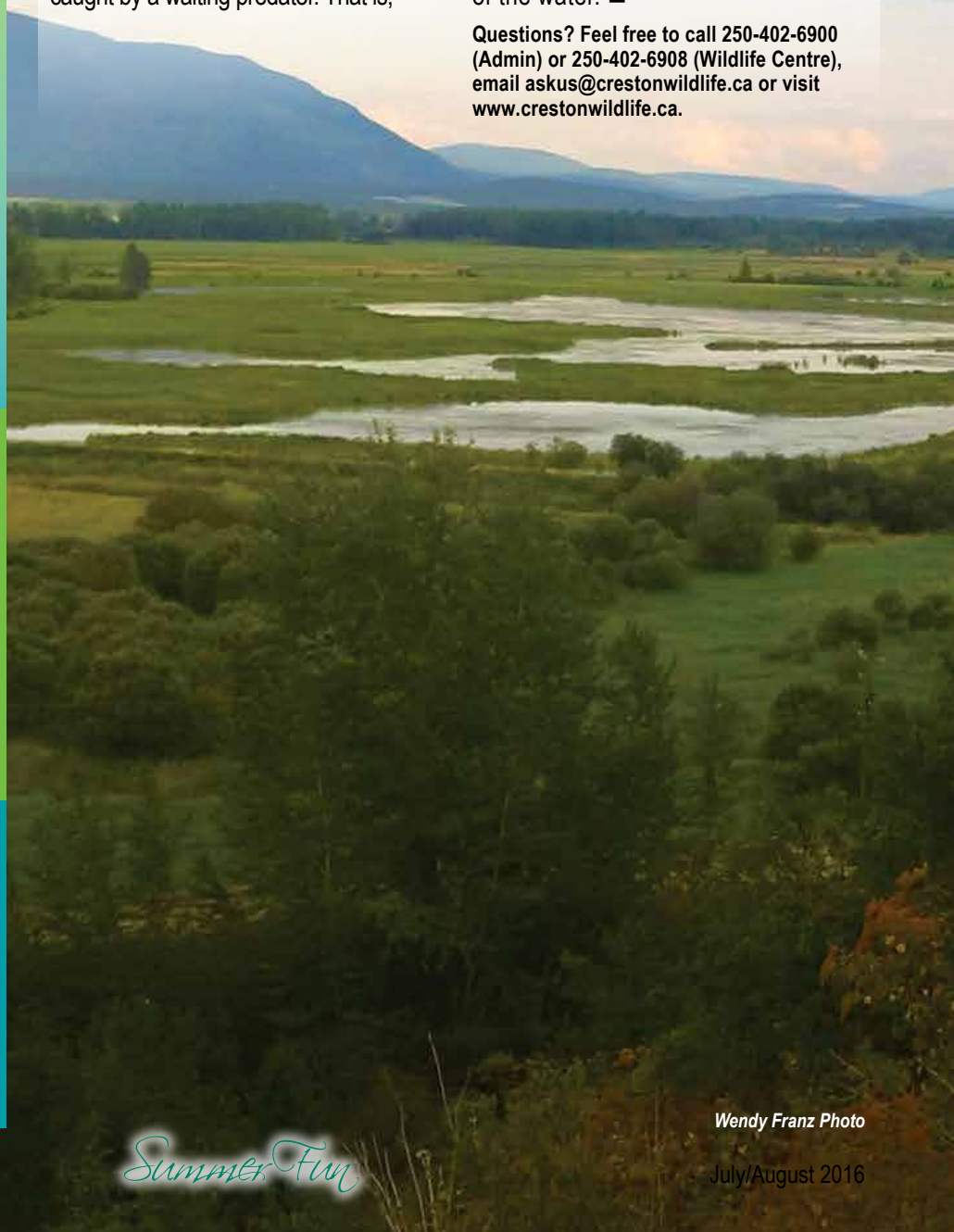
Both have adaptations that allow them to breathe and eat at the same time, as each possesses a snorkeling device on the posterior end. This snorkel allows them to breathe air from the surface while the remainder of the body stays safely below the water surface.

Then there is the aquatic form of the damselfly and even the larval salamander. Both have external gills for raking the O (oxygen) out of the H₂O. This adaptation provides the oxygen they need without having to break the surface and risk being caught by a waiting predator. That is,

until a four-foot-tall, two-legged creature comes along wielding a dip net and a bucket, squealing with delight at the possibilities waiting under the thick carpet of duckweed.

Yes, a child on a dip-netting mission must be a menacing sight for a creature of the aquatic world. Luckily, though they may be caught, poked, prodded and watched at the CVWMA, they will always be released back to life as they know it – at least until the next time, when a group comes along to revel and scream at the creatures of the water. ■

Questions? Feel free to call 250-402-6900 (Admin) or 250-402-6908 (Wildlife Centre), email askus@crestonwildlife.ca or visit www.crestonwildlife.ca.



Wendy Franz Photo

Summer Fun

July/August 2016



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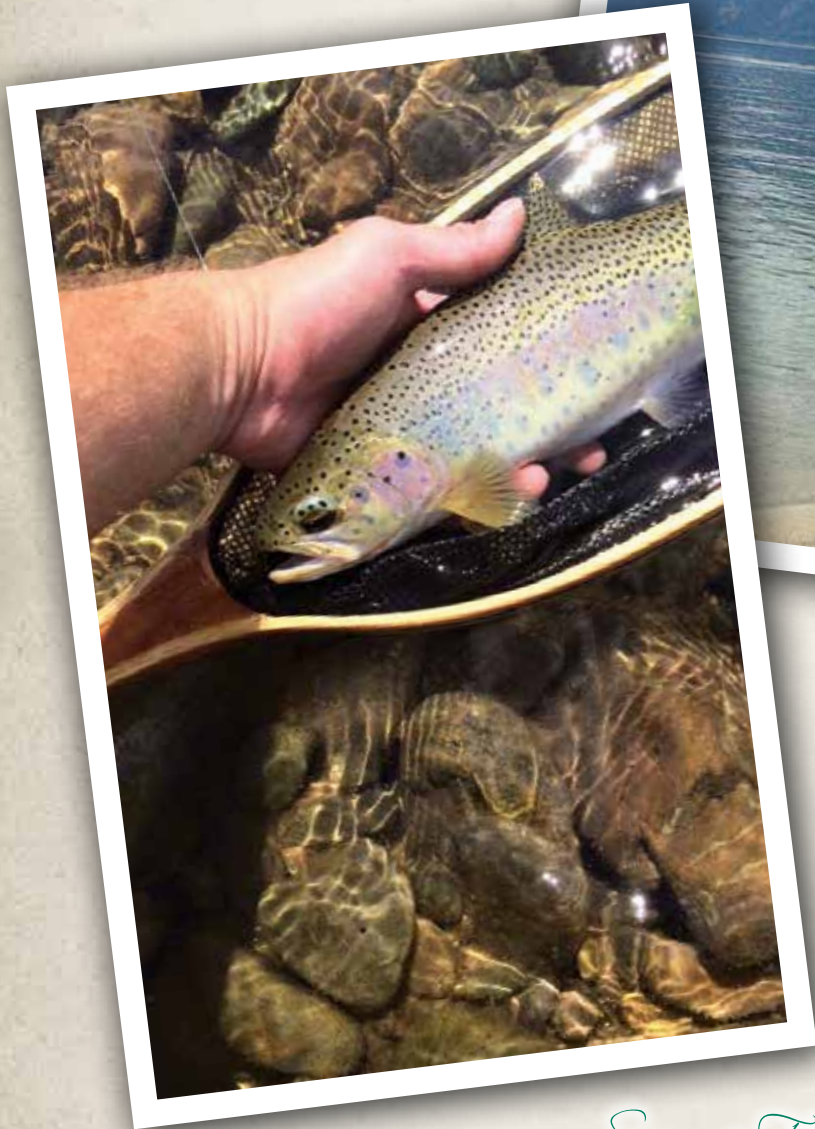
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Your Shots

Readers Share
Their Favourite
Summer Activities!



Sue Mclarty Photo
Meagen Mclarty doing a handstand
on a Kootenay Lake beach.

Rindy Stalley/Creston Valley Angling
A brook trout caught in a Kootenay stream.



Sitina Bredy Photo

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Sculptures on Display Downtown

Submitted by: Creston Valley Public Arts Connection Society

Jerry McKellar Bad Hair Day (bronze)

Jerry McKellar (www.jerrymckellar.com) studied dentistry and practiced in Colville, Washington — just across the border — until his retirement in 1994. Throughout his practice, he found time to sketch wildlife and craft detailed jewelry for family and friends. His first bronze sculpture was completed in 1987 and his repertoire, along with numerous awards and honours, has expanded since then. Many of his sculptures are historically accurate depictions of Native American life or, as is the case in Otter Woman, his interpretation of a Native American myth or story passed on through the generations. Figures, both human and animal, from the American West are also a favourite subject of McKellar's.

Bad Hair Day is also a figurative piece but deliberately coarser. Capturing a rather threadbare burro that he and his wife observed while traveling in Greece, it is bedraggled and losing its winter coat. As burros tend to be, though, it is stalwart and staunch. Squared away and ever sturdy, McKellar's fine rendering gives the subject dignity and pride — even with its overgrown forelock and mane draping along its spine, revealing a woolly rump and patchwork flanks. Ears cocked and head swiveled, he seems to take it all in stride, no doubt having endured carrying many loads. "What's a little shedding of hair?" seems his repose; McKellar animates the work fittingly with exacting realism.

1. Where do you draw the inspiration for your sculptures, specifically this year's entry? I started sculpting wildlife, but later added figurative work.



Submitted Photo

Creston Valley Public Arts Connection Society members Bruce Johnston, Sandy Kunze, Tanya Wall, Joanna Wilson and Kris Dickeson with Jerry McKellar's Bad Hair Day.

The idea for my life-size burro, "A Bad Hair Day", came from a trip we took to Greece where I took a photo of a miserable little burro out in the rain, losing its winter coat.

2. Which artist, past or present, has had a major impact on you as a sculptor and why? On our trips to Europe I have admired many sculptures by the masters, but I would say my artist peers have been the most help since I have never taken an art course. Artists as a whole are very warm, helpful people and have helped on any questions that I have had over the years.

3. Was there a defining time or moment in your life when you realized sculpting was something you wanted to do for a living? Actually, sculpting was a hobby that got out of control. In 1994, I made the decision to retire from 25 years as a dentist to devote more time to my art career.

4. Do you always utilize the same material(s) as this year's piece, and why is it your preferred medium? Although I have designed pieces for steel fabrication, I like bronze sculpture for the unending three-dimensional possibilities, its permanence, and the

ability to use a large variety of patinas.

5. What is the importance of the arts in today's society? "Feeding the soul" is a far cry from "feeding one's family". On the other hand, sculptural installations, public murals and other forms of art can enrich people's lives and give a heightened sense of community pride. Art can also become a tourist attraction and add a positive economic impact.

Pokey Park Zodiac Totem (bronze)

With "Zodiac Totem", Pokey Park (www.pokeypark.com) gives us not one of her whimsical, distinctive animal bronzes but five. Representing symbols from the Japanese and Chinese calendars, Park has substituted animals native to her American southwest milieu as she sees fit. The result is a sumptuous totem of animal figures standing nine feet tall and full of rich detail. It is unmistakably hers; the stylization of the animals is unique, honed through her years of sculpting and animal study. Park was raised on the coastal bays of the American South, specifically



Submitted Photo
Pokey Park's Zodiac Totem.

Georgia. It was here that she developed an early appreciation and love for both animals and art — passions she has melded into a highly successful career as one of the United States best-known wildlife sculptors.

Her works are immediately recognizable. She infuses her animal sculptures with human characteristics, making them endearing and engaging. A trademark of her animal representations is the yoga-like contortions they assume, yet remain immediately identifiable.

In this configuration of the many zodiac totems she has sculpted, five figures sit atop one another. Anchoring the totem is a blissful frog basking on a lily pad with carp circling beneath it. The base represents both Pisces and Aquarius, the water signs essential to all life. Above is a delightful desert rat, tail curled behind an ear and paws framing its face.

Next is the ox, head down and delicately balanced on front hoofs. Moving upward, we find the puma — substituting for the tiger — head aslant, paws clutching its haunches in a ball and long tail providing balance. Finally, the totem is topped with a curled rabbit, one long hind leg scratching its ear and tail front and centre.

“The variety of the animal kingdom, combined with the cultural mythology that I attempt to inject into each sculpture, provides endless inspiration,” she says. “I use the flow of lines and surface patterns to emphasize movement and balance. Particularly in the totems, as their linear nature demands that the positioning I choose for each animal accentuates that balance.”

Particularly appealing to the viewer is that each of the totem's figures can be

acquired as an individual work. Indeed, any of Park's twelve compelling totem figures can be combined to form a one-of-a-kind, personalized totem like “Zodiac Totem”.

While proficient in sculpting other marvellous bronze pieces like chess sets, children and panels, it is her stylized animals that she is best known for. They comprise most of the body of her extensive portfolio and why wouldn't they? They are beautifully sculpted, alive and animated.

As she puts it so well, “I try to express the underlying joy in the world in my sculptures.” Her many animal sculptures testify to her success in doing just that. “Zodiac Totem” combines five of them in an consummate manner.

Zohreh Vahidifard 30 Birds (2) (iron)

Iran's cultural and artistic history over thousands of years is well-known, so it is little wonder that a vibrant contemporary art scene flourishes in the country — Zohreh Vahidifard is a sculptor and painter who is part of it. “30 Birds (2)” is the first piece she has shown in North America, although her work has been displayed nationally and in Europe. Vahidifard has mounted seven solo exhibitions and been part of over 70 collective shows of her history/fable-based sculptures and paintings.

Interested in art from an early age, the Tehran sculptor has a master's degree in her two main disciplines. Prior to obtaining her degree she considered studies and a career in medicine but opted to pursue her first passion.

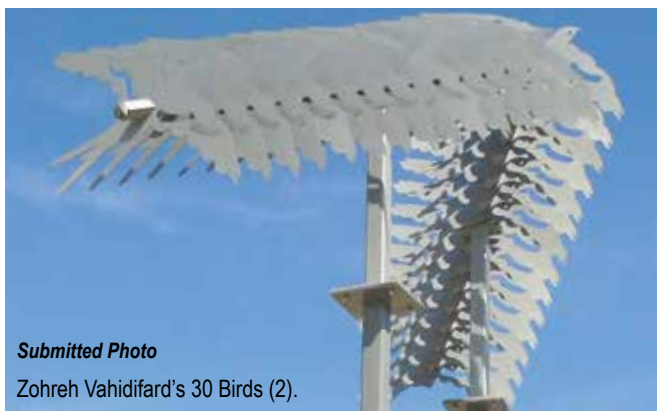


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She started with drawing, painting decorations and graphics but recognized sculpture would enable greater freedom of expression, "the need for more and varied space," as she puts it. Her works are often based on historical events/traditional stories, continuing the majestic legacy of Iranian art and culture that has been nurtured for centuries.

30 Birds (2) is based on Persian folklore. A flock of birds were angry with humans for shooting them and ruining their habitat. They flew ceaselessly until they finally reached Ghaf Mountain (Paradise). Only 30 were left to enjoy it. Vahidifard's sculpture is them wingtip to wingtip. In light iron she has sculpted them in a large V, each a likeness of the other. Uniform in light grey, their swift-like, long, forked tail feathers are countered by the rounded ruffles of the wings.



Submitted Photo
Zohreh Vahidifard's 30 Birds (2).

1. Where do you draw the inspiration for your sculptures, specifically this year's entry? Most of the Iranian literature. 30 birds (Simurgh) is one story in Iranian folk literature. It is about a group of birds angry with the cruelty of hunters therefore they decided to change their place. They passed from mountains, valleys and different places. On the way, most of the birds were tired and died. Finally some of the birds reached Ghaf Mountain (Paradise) where they rested, looked each other. And noticed, only 30 birds together received true paradise.

2. Which artist, past or present, has had a major impact on you as a sculptor and why? I have a quick look at the work of artists, but I get most of my ideas from Iranian traditional stories and ancient symbols of Iran.

3. Was there a defining time or moment in your life when you realized sculpting was something you wanted to do for a living? In adolescence I thought I would become a doctor, but over time I became acquainted with the visual arts and realized the only thing that makes me happy is art. I started with drawings, graphics, makeup, decorations, and I concluded I need a wider space, more varied and more numerous spaces in order to express my own thoughts. Thus I choose to become a sculptor.

4. Do you always utilize the same material(s) as this year's piece, and why is it your preferred medium? I use

this technique more. I like metals because with metals I can express new and expressive space better.

5. What is the importance of the arts in today's society? Art and beauty are in the nature of each person. History narrates that, before the discovery of spoken language, art was a means to communicate between people. Art is the best means for direct contact between all communities all around the world that make individuals able to transmit their true inner feelings. ■

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Wendy Franz Photo

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NOT TO BE MISSED!

Creston Museum
Manager
Tammy Bradford
Highlights
Her Favourite
Artifacts!



Creston Museum Photos

Above: Wingtip of the first airplane to land in Creston, then the first airplane to take off from Creston, then the first airplane to crash in Creston (it was quite an afternoon).

Left: A bottle with a marble inside it (explanations available to all who come in to see it).

Below: A bola stone, used by the Ktunaxa people for hunting.



Creston Museum Photos

Right: A Vaughn Flex-Tred tracked garden plough.

Below: A pool table that turns into a couch.



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