

The Rocky Mountain Naturalists adopted Elizabeth Lake in the 1990's. Since then, they have managed the area in cooperation with the City of Cranbrook, The Land Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and other interested parties.

The Naturalist Club built the trail system, installed interpretive signs, seeded some of the area with native grasses and planted shrubs and trees.

The Western Painted Turtle is a common inhabitant of Elizabeth Lake thanks to the efforts of the Rocky Mountain Naturalists under the leadership of Art Gruenig and with funding from Columbia Basin Trust Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program.

The Western Painted Turtle is the only native freshwater turtle in BC. On sunny days from May until September turtles bask on logs in the marsh.

To reduce the turtles' need to cross to the north side of the highway to reach their historic nesting sites, volunteers built turtle nesting sites on the south side of the highway. This effort increased the turtles nesting success and longevity. Nesting turtles lay 6-18 leathery eggs in the fall, where the eggs remain in the nest until spring. The turtle will abandon its nesting attempt if it is disturbed.

These specific nesting behaviors, as well as habitat loss are the primary reasons why this turtle species is considered a BC "blue-listed" species at risk.

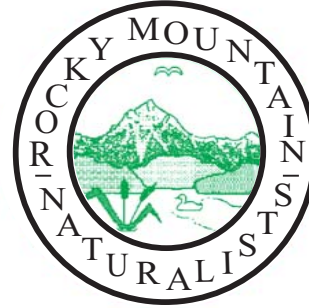
History of the Elizabeth Lake Marsh

Elizabeth Lake was formed 10,000 years ago with the last major glacier retreat. It was used by the Ktunaxa First Nations as far back as 5,000 years ago. The lake once covered the grasslands to the north and east. Around the 1950's the area was used as a dumping ground for concrete, asphalt, sawmill tailings and other materials. The marsh habitat was mostly destroyed.

The value of the area was finally recognized in the 1970's. Various groups attempted to establish formal protection for the area. Some restoration projects were initiated at that time.

Today Elizabeth Lake/ Confederation Park is within the City of Cranbrook parks system and it features popular walking trails and birdwatching blinds.

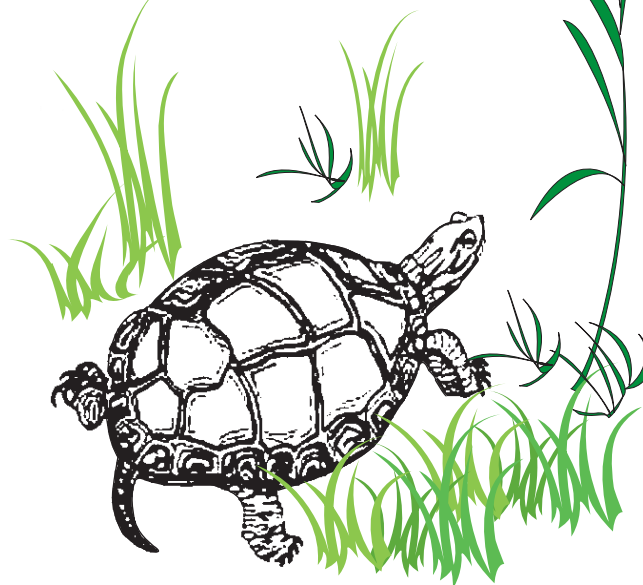
The Rocky Mountain Naturalists
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Rocky Mountain Naturalists goal is to assist with habitat conservation and manage the wetland to help Elizabeth Lake be a healthy, functioning ecosystem, with a diversity of native plants and animals where people can discover and enjoy nature.

The group's volunteers are working to raise public awareness, restore native vegetation, control noxious weeds and protect the water supply that feeds the marsh.

Be part of the solution. Donations of time or money are always welcome. Help us manage the Elizabeth Lake habitat.



Elizabeth Lake

Trail Map

Confederation Park,

Cranbrook, B.C.

A popular birdwatching wetland and grassland habitat on the southwestern edge of Cranbrook.



"Wetlands filter your water."

Elizabeth Lake in Confederation Park is a 5.9 hectare wildlife sanctuary. The preserved habitat features the round freshwater pond and wetland, about 1-kilometre in diameter.

The preserved area extends to include the surrounding grasslands on the north bank.

Forests rim the marsh along the south and eastern shores.

Elizabeth Lake in Cranbrook's Confederation Park

Birds Commonly Sighted

Diving ducks:

- Ring-necked Duck
- Lesser Scaup
- Common & Barrow's Goldeneye
- Redhead
- Canvasback
- Ruddy Duck

Dabbling ducks:

- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- American Wigeon
- Blue-winged & Green-winged Teal
- Gadwall

Shorebirds:

- Killdeer
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Sora Rail
- Lesser & Greater Yellowlegs

Grebes:

- Pied-billed
- Horned & Red-necked

Blackbirds:

- Red-winged
- Yellow-headed
- Brewer's

Swallows:

- Violet-green
- Northern Rough-winged
- Tree

Nesting on islands:

- Canada Goose

Nesting in cattails:

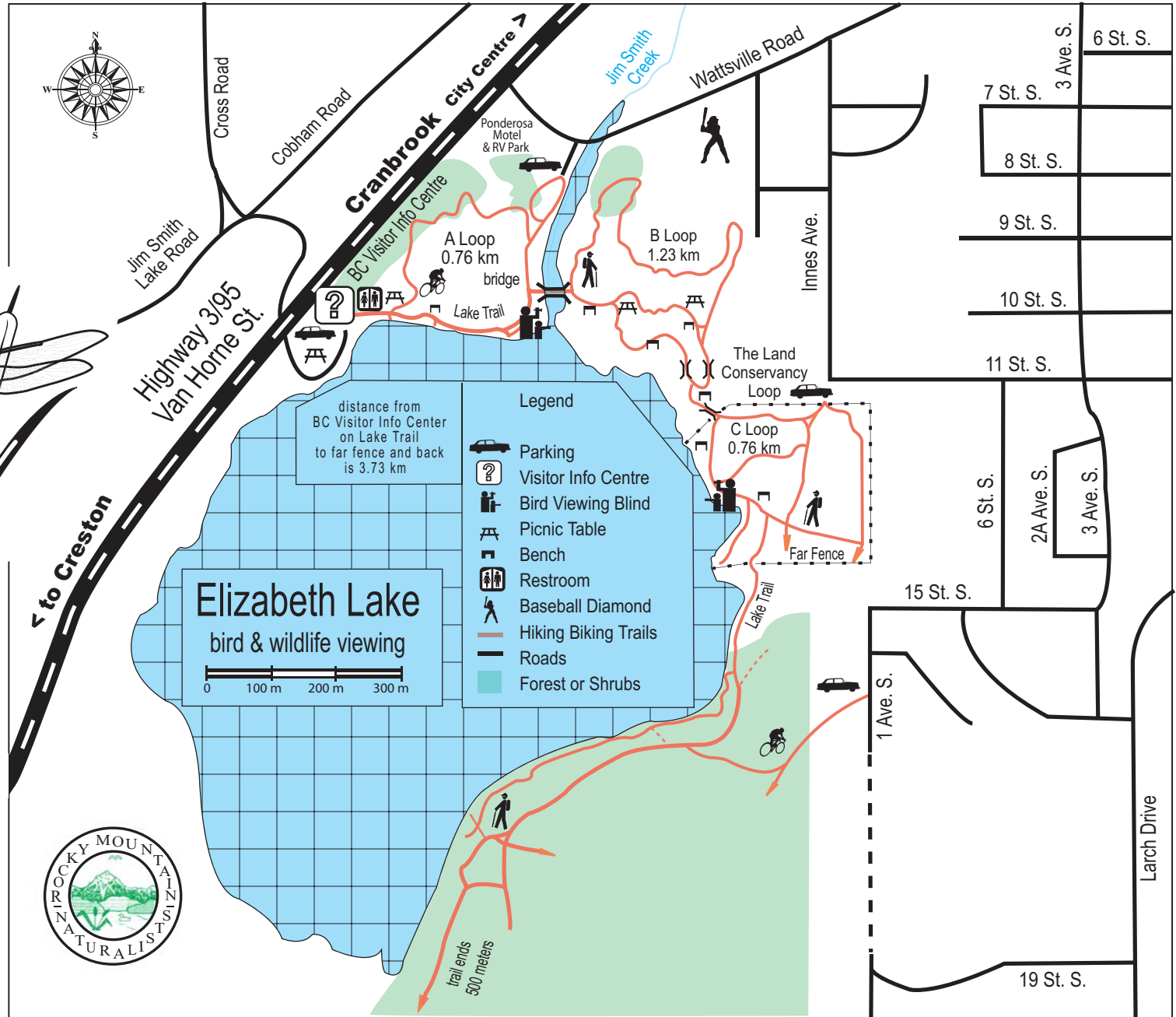
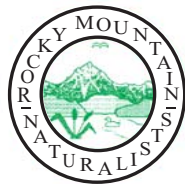
- Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Black Tern

Nesting in shrubs on shore:

- Bullock's Oriole
- Yellow Warbler
- Red-eyed & Warbling Vireo
- Sparrows (White-crowned, Chipping, Savannah, Song)
- American Robin
- Townsend's Solitaire
- Gray Catbird

Hawks & Falcons:

- Red-tailed
- Sharp-shinned
- American Kestrel



Birds Occasionally Sighted

- Great Egret, White-faced Ibis, Mountain & Western Birdbird
- American Avocet, Western Meadowlark, Wilson's Phalarope, Black-necked Stilt

Mammals around Elizabeth Lake

- Coyote, Cougar, Muskrat, Elk, Deer, Moose, Skunk, Columbian Ground Squirrel.