



PRESS RELEASE

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The 12th annual 2021 WildWings Nature & Arts Festival begins Saturday October 2nd

The Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS) is pleased to announce that the 12th anniversary WildWings Nature & Arts Festival launches Saturday October 2 with a full roster of 24 events running to the end of October.

WildWings is a month-long community-wide celebration hosted by the SMWS in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, the Cowichan Valley Naturalists, and our newest partner, the Cowichan Valley Arts Council. Established in 2009 by the SMWS, the purpose of the festival is to bring attention to the important natural ecosystems of the Cowichan Valley by celebrating the interconnectedness of nature, art, culture, and community.

The festival launches with ***S'amunu Make a Difference Day*** where groups of volunteers fan out into the S'amunu/Somenos Watershed streams in search of garbage and other human-left debris. This is followed the next day with ***Celebrate Somenos Family Day***, a family activity day at the Somenos Marsh Open Air Classroom. The WildWings Nature Arts Show is also open for viewing at Just Jakes from October 3rd but is limited to sit down guests only due to Covid restrictions. There is also a

Back-to-back action begins Thursday October 6th with '***An Evening with Wade Davis***' providing the keynote speech on the Festival theme- '*Sharing a Sense of Place*' Thursday October 7th at the Cowichan Performing Arts Centre and then Friday evening, to wrap up the week, ***The Story of a Wolf and a Woman***, a presentation about Takaya, the wolf who lived on the archipelago outside of Victoria at the VIU Lecture Theatre. Both Wade and Cheryl will each be available 2-4pm in the afternoon before their events for a book signing at Volume One books in downtown Duncan.

The rest of October features 35 more art, cultural and nature events. Returning favourites include the ***Pi'kwun*** on the beach at Cowichan Bay with Chef Qwustenuxun assisted by the Community Farm Store's Chef, James Day, a ***Medicinal Plant Walk*** in Bright Angel Park, ***Afloat in a Boat*** tour of Somenos Lake, and ***The It Ain't Easy Being Green Gala***, aka ***The Green Gala***, at the Birds Eye Cove farm.

This year also features some new events including the ***Big Day Birding Weekend*** hosted by the Cowichan Valley Naturalists, where birding enthusiasts can catch The Big Year movie (filmed in Cowichan Bay) at the Caprice Theatre and compete the next day in a fun birding competition between the Somenos Marsh and Cowichan Bay Important Bird Areas to win the IBA Big Rooster award for 2021.

Other events include exploring the Koksilah secret forest, learning about estate gifts for conservation hosted by the Pacific Salmon Foundation, a presentation about the geology of the Cowichan Valley and seeing American Bullfrogs in a different light. Hands-on events include a drum making workshop and Plein Air painting workshop, both hosted by the Cowichan Valley Arts Council.

Many events are free, by donation, or with reduced prices for families. Tickets are on sale now and please note that All WildWings events are subject to any changing Covid restrictions. To learn more about any festival events, book tickets, or to check on Covid restrictions affecting event attendance, please visit www.wildwingsfestival.com/events.

Funds raised from WildWings are used to support future WildWings Festivals and the SMWS GreenStreams Community Stewardship Program. To learn more about GreenStreams and the work of the SMWS, please visit www.somenosmarsh.com.

The WildWings Nature & Arts Festival major support comes from the Edmonton Community Foundation, Municipality of North Cowichan, Community Farm Store, and the Nature Trust of BC.

For more info info@somenosmarsh.com or 250 732-0462

The artwork featured above is by Jennifer Hedge, 2021 Artist of the Somenos

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