

TRAIL MAP

Welcome to the Bullmoose Marshes, which are situated beside Hwy 29, 24 kilometers from Tumbler Ridge and 67 kilometers from Chetwynd.

Donations were provided by Ducks Unlimited Canada, Bullmoose Operating Corporation, Ron Colledge of Babcock Mountain Sawmills Ltd, and Brian Baker. The support of Wild Bird Trust of BC, Wonder of Water and TR Ecokids is gratefully acknowledged.

Text by Charles Helm, with scientific assistance from R. Wayne Campbell, Richard Kabzems, and Nigel Mathews. Photo: Kevin Sharman, Art: Joan Zimmer.

The Bullmoose Marshes Trails were built in 2003 by volunteers of the Wolverine Nordic and Mountain Society with permission from the Ministry of Forests.

The Sora Trail (500 meters return) and Bittern Trail (1300 meters return) wind through a variety of forest and wetland habitats to viewing platforms. Here some of the waters of Bullmoose Creek pause in their journey to the cold Arctic Ocean, in backwaters, beaver dams and meadows.

The area was once a glaciofluvial meltwater channel. It now shows many erosional and depositional features such as oxbow lakes and abandoned channels, significantly modified by beaver action.

Mature spruce forest was logged in 1971. Debris and snags were piled and burned – remains of this can still be seen in places. The area was replanted in 1974. In 1990 an excavator created the mounds and depressions that now characterize parts of the

marshes, so that spruce seedlings could be planted on the mounds to help regenerate the forest. The area to the north of the trailheads was a camp in 1981 during the North East Coal development.

Mammals include Grizzly Bear, Black Bear, Moose, White-tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Wolf, Coyote, Woodchuck, Red Squirrel, Red-backed Vole, Beaver, and Muskrat. Signs of beaver activity are numerous: dams, trails, felled trees and lodges.

A total of 74 bird species have been identified. Nesting boxes and bird feeders have been put up alongside the trails.

All four northeastern BC frog species occur here: Western Toad, Columbia Spotted Frog, Wood Frog and Boreal Chorus Frog. One harmless species of reptile, the Common Garter Snake, can sometimes be seen sunning itself beside the water. The marshes form breeding grounds for some of the fish species from Bullmoose Creek.

There is a marked variety of habitats, depending on soil type, moisture content, and elevation: from dry pine to moist spruce forest, balsam poplar groves, alder and willow thickets, grass and sedge meadows, seasonally inundated marshes, and permanent water.

Flowering plants of the moist meadows like Tall Bluebell, Tall Larkspur, Grass of Parnassus and Fireweed contrast with the typical forest understory flowers of Bunchberry, Dry Ground Cranberry and Kinnikinnick.

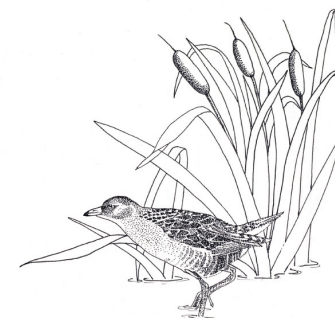
SORA TRAIL

The short Sora Trail leads through willow and balsam poplar thickets, young spruce forests and meadows, with lots of warblers (Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Waterthrush).

It ends with a short boardwalk section and viewing platform with benches, and a good view of an expanse of water – look for Wilson’s Snipe and Solitary Sandpiper which nest near the boardwalk. Tree Swallows nest in the snags across the water. Barrow’s Goldeneye, Mallard, American Wigeon and Bufflehead are often seen, frequently with ducklings.

Sora are common in the marshes to the left of the trail, and are more often heard than seen – listen for a

horse-like whinnying sound. Red-winged Blackbirds are ubiquitous, and nest in the tufts of vegetation above the water.



Sora

BITTERN TRAIL

Ten meters along the Bittern Trail is a pine tree on the left, with holes carved in its base by a Pileated Woodpecker. After 50 meters the trail traverses a Red Squirrel midden, then emerges on the edge of a gravel terrace in dry pine forest, with beautiful views of the marshes, past some strategically placed benches.

It then enters a more moist spruce forest (listen for Blackpoll Warbler), crosses a small seasonal stream, and then passes through rich seasonally wet meadows. It climbs briefly up the side of a hill, then levels out to give expansive views of the marshes and Bullmoose Mountain in the distance.

It descends via a staircase to the final 50 meters of boardwalk, which leads above iron-rich springs to another viewing platform. This site has provided one of the few American Bittern records for the region.



American Bittern

BIRDS

- American Bittern
- Canada Goose
- American Wigeon
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Green-winged Teal
- Bufflehead
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Ring-necked duck
- Wood Duck
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Northern Goshawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Bald Eagle
- Osprey
- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Ruffed Grouse
- Sora
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Semipalmated Plover
- Least Sandpiper
- Wilson's Snipe
- Great Horned Owl
- Boreal Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Vaux's Swift
- Red-naped Sapsucker
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Northern Flicker
- Pileated Woodpecker
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Western Wood-Pewee
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Alder Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Warbling Vireo
- Gray Jay
- Common Raven
- Tree Swallow
- Cliff Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Boreal Chickadee
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- American Dipper
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Mountain Bluebird
- American Robin
- Varied Thrush
- Bohemian Waxwing
- Cedar Waxwing
- Tennessee Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Blackpoll Warbler
- American Redstart
- Northern Waterthrush
- MacGillivray's Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Wilson's Warbler
- Chipping Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-throated Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Rusty Blackbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- White-winged Crossbill
- Pine Siskin

Wetlands provide essential habitat for many wildlife and plant species, and are focal ecosystems for many others.

Thank you for visiting the Bullmoose Marshes Wetland Interpretive Area. Please pack out all garbage and leave the trails cleaner than you found them.

Please report all new and interesting sightings, and any breeding records to Charles Helm: phone (250) 242-3984.

BULLMOOSE MARSHES

HIKING TRAIL AND WETLAND INTERPRETIVE AREA

