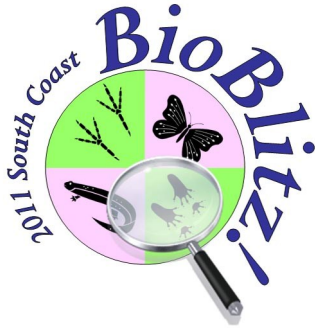


Watershed Connections

Fraser Valley BioBlitz By Pamela Zevit, R.P. Bio. For The South Coast BioBlitz Partners

“BioBlitzing” – coming to a neighbourhood near you!



They say “variety is the spice of life” so getting involved in a Biodiversity Blitz or “BioBlitz” is a way to spice up your community! Biological diversity or biodiversity as it is more commonly referred to, is the variety of life on earth. From the microscopic level of genes and bacteria to the array of species and ecosystems that surround us, there are millions of life forms that we share this planet with.

While many scientists, specialists and conservation organizations focus on studying and protecting this web of life, the average person does not always have an opportunity to connect with the natural world at the same level. Efforts to bridge the world of applied sciences with the public interest have occurred for over a century. But it has really been in the last few decades that broader interest and support to create a “citizen science” movement has been underway.

One of these approaches was to get communities involved in discovering and indentifying the levels of biodiversity in their own backyard. In 1996 the first “BioBlitz” occurred at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington D.C. The term was coined by National Park Service naturalist Susan Rudy. A BioBlitz is a 24-hour inventory of all living things in a given area, often a local park. The event has the dual aims of establishing the degree of biodiversity in an area

Specialists in various disciplines like botany, entomology, ornithology all play a role. Some BioBlitzes become an annual event. Scientists establish a base at a point close to the area to be blitzed and provide expertise in identifying species found by the public as well as doing their own inspection of the area.

Ideally, a full BioBlitz takes place over a full 24-hour period as different organisms are likely to be found at different times of day (like birds, bats,



while connecting local citizens, community groups and land use managers with concepts of conservation science.

insects etc.). Daytime blitzes over shorter periods are equally popular, but of course the results will less accurately show the variety of life in the area.