



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Native Plant News

Vol. 16, No. 2

Summer 2011

Biodiversity on display



PHOTOS BY CHET NEUFELD

(Above) Round-leaved orchid (*Amerorchis rotundifolia*) and (below) bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) in Prince Albert National Park. See story on Pages 6 and 7.

NPSS goes on a Saskatchewan ecosystem bio blitz



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

(Above) Short-horned lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*) basks in the sun at Grasslands National Park. See story on Page 3.



PHOTOS BY DAVID FREEMAN

(Above) Ground plum (*Astragalus crassicaarpus*) grow at the Last Mountain Lake Wildlife Area Seed Nursery. (Right) A mealy primrose (*Primula incana*) stands at attention. See story on Pages 4 and 5.



2 Executive Director's summer report

5 Celebrate our forests in 2011 with a free tree

7 History and biodiversity at the NE swale

8 Photo contest is back for a third year

NPSS Board of Directors

**President:**

Tara Sample 777-9137

Past-President

Michael Champion 780-6850

Vice-President:

John Hauer 463-5507

Treasurer:

Cheri Sykes 924-8028

Secretary:

Sarah James 780-6121

Directors:

Leanne Heisler 347-0447 ext. 225

Jennifer Lohmeyer 787-8707

Margaret Put 921-6361

Kerry Hecker 836-2022

Shelley Heidinger 634-9771

David Engel 472-5988

Executive Director:

Chet Neufeld 668-3940

Newsletter Editor:

David Freeman 791-0047

NPSS Address:

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

P.O. Box 21099, Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9

Phone: (306) 668-3940 Fax: (306) 668-3940

E-mail: info@npss.sk.ca Website: www.npss.sk.ca

Native Plant News is a quarterly publication of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) and is one of the benefits of membership. Members are invited to submit articles, news, views, photographs and comments. Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the NPSS.

Deadlines:**Submission****Publication**

Winter Issue: November 1 December 15

Spring Issue: February 1 March 15

Summer Issue: May 1 June 15

Fall Issue: August 1 September 15

Membership Dues (Year End November 30th)

Individual \$30

Family \$45

Student \$15

Corporate \$200

Life \$500

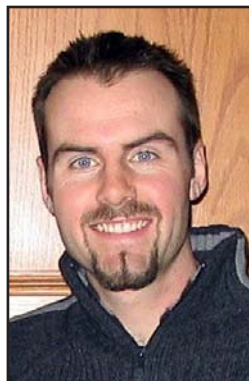
Please contact the NPSS office for information about the lifetime membership instalment payment option.

Executive director's summer message

It's hard to believe the summer is half over considering the months of rain we received already this year. We had more of a monsoon season than a spring. Despite all of the weather related problems, the NPSS has been as busy as ever.

Our annual general meeting was one of the best attended in recent memory and we have had more field tours this summer than in a long time – this issue is dedicated to them almost entirely (see Pages 3 to 7 for more details).

This year, we have also submitted many proposals for funding.



Our proposal to once again control the invasive flowering rush was given provincial funding. With this support we hope to eradicate what remains of the only known population of flowering rush in Saskatchewan, which will benefit wetland biodiversity across the province. We have also submitted two proposals with Environment Canada; one targeting invasive species through a combination of awareness campaigns and field projects and the other aimed at developing educational resources about native plants for Saskatchewan schools.

Once again this year we were able to employ a summer student to tend our native plant nursery in Regina, but with reduced funding from previous years. Due to the rain, it has been a struggle to keep the weeds in check as it is difficult to access the site and equipment such as rototillers have so far not been an option. To try and get ahead of the weeds, we will once again be holding weeding bees at the nursery throughout the summer. A schedule is being drafted and will be sent out to the membership and posted on our website once it is finalized.

Speaking of our website, if you haven't visited it lately you're missing out! We work hard to constantly keep it up to date with the latest event notices, projects and information. We have recently converted some of our print only resources to downloadable PDFs and have done the same with some of our native plant resources, like plant checklists for areas across Saskatchewan. You can find these under the **Info Resources** tab.

In addition to using our website, why don't you friend us on Facebook? We have an active profile and are constantly updating it with new event notices, photos and videos. In fact, we have photos from our recent field tours posted there for your enjoyment.

Speaking of Facebook, we're currently part of an environmental contest sponsored by Evergreen and Fido called the Share Your Care Campaign. The groups with the most votes get funding, so we need you to vote for the NPSS project, Native Plants in the Classroom. A link can be found on our Facebook page. Voting ends Aug. 14.

Well that's my update for this issue. If you have any questions about the society or any of our initiatives, please feel free to call me at 306-668-3940 or email me at info@npss.sk.ca.*

Advertise in the *Native Plant News*



Contact the NPSS for rates at info@npss.sk.ca or visit www.npss.sk.ca to view our rate card.

Grow your business, plant the seeds of success here.

GNP rare plant survey

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

In early June the NPSS ventured to Grasslands National Park to conduct a rare plant survey at the bequest of park staff. Our members did not disappoint.

The survey was conducted because Parks Canada is proposing to develop hiking trails in the Eagle Butte and 70 Mile Butte area and needed experienced eyes to tell them if their proposed trail routes were going to impact any rare plant populations.

On June 10 and 11, we had 10 participants walk the proposed trails and map any rare plant populations they encountered. Due to the wet spring, the area was covered in blooming wildflowers, so it was difficult to concentrate on the task at hand with so much to see! Nonetheless, we managed to finish our survey by the end of the second day.

What we found was amazing! Nearly every portion of the trail contained some rare plant species of interest (S3 and S4), and many were quite rare (S1 and S2). In fact, once we downloaded our GPS data, the rare plant occurrences basically joined one another to form the proposed trail route. Some of the very rare plant species included Indian milkvetch (*Astragalus australis* – an S2), clustered oreocarya (*Cryptanthe celosioides* – an S1), squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides* – an S2), Bessey's locoweed (*Oxytropis besseyi* – an S2) and rush pink (*Stephanomeria runcinata* – an S1S2).

In addition to the many colourful and interesting plants, we also



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

NPSS members record rare plant populations in Grasslands National Park during the rare plant survey in June.

spotted a large bull snake and two short-horned lizards – a very rare sight indeed. We also compiled a comprehensive plant species list for the proposed trail route, which was submitted to the park staff along with our rare plant map and report in order

to help them with their management of the site. Thank-you to Parks Canada and all who participated. Special thanks to Glen and Maureen Lee, Tracy Hansen and Candace Neufeld for their expertise.

To view this checklist, visit our website under the News tab. To see more photos from the field trip, please visit our Facebook page. 🌸



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Gumbo evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*) showing its true colours. On the left is a newly bloomed flower in a pristine white, while on the right the older bloom is pink.

Upcoming Events

August 2011

NPSS Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery Work Bee

Saturday, August 13

9 a.m. to noon

Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery
Regina, Sask.

The nursery needs your help. Come on out to help rid the nursery of pesky weeds, conduct general maintenance and meet other native plant enthusiasts.
www.npss.sk.ca

September 2011

Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation's Women's Outdoor Weekend

September 10 and 11

Lumsden Beach Camp
Regina, Sask.

Deadline to register is Friday, Aug. 19. Come out and learn outdoor skills such as canoeing, wildlife and birdsong identification, archery and much more! The Iron Chef food challenge will once again take place with this year's mystery ingredient! **Contact JeanAnne Prysiak by phone at 306-692-8812 or email at jprysiak.swf@sasktel.net www.swf.sk.ca**

19th Annual North American Weed Management Conference

September 19 to 22

Fort Garry Canad Inn,
Winnipeg, Man.

The NAWMA Conference will deliver a forum of national and international speakers covering a variety of topics related to weed control as well as hosting field tours, displays and social events.
www.nawma.org/

February 2011

Native Prairie Restoration/Reclamation Workshop 2012

February 8 and 9, 2011

TCU Place
Saskatoon, Sask.
Details to come.
www.pcap-sk.org

To submit your native plant related event to our events list, send your information (including date, contact, phone number and location) to info@npss.sk.ca.



PHOTOS BY DAVID FREEMAN

(Left) Tour participants learn about native grasses in the seed nursery. (Right) Cotton-grass (*Eriophorum* sp.) in a riparian area.

Restoring our prairie grasslands

By TARA SAMPLE
NPSS President

I have to admit that I was pretty excited about visiting the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area this past June. As a student, I remember listening intently to a guest lecturer describe a new, large scale project to restore cultivated land in this area back to its former native self.

That was over a decade ago, when restoration was a relatively new concept in Saskatchewan.

I certainly wasn't alone in my interest in the area. A good sized group of native plant enthusiasts gathered at the beautiful native plant nursery just outside the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area (LMLNWA) office on June 25.



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

A Canadian toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*) hangs out in some buffalo grass.



PHOTOS BY DAVID FREEMAN

Female (right) and male (left) inflorescences of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*).

While the primary purpose of the nursery is to provide some of the seed used in restoration projects, the beds also provide visitors with a unique opportunity to familiarize themselves with 70 plant species native to the area.

Participants were able to see a variety of native plants in varying stages of their reproduction cycle and learn about their propagation at the nursery from NPSS board member and Wildlife Area Manager, Kerry Hecker.

The next stop was one of the patches of native mixed-grass prairie found within the LMLNWA. The area had been recently burned by Environment Canada.

Fire is an important process that helps shaped the prairie ecozone. Fire has been re-introduced as a tool to maintain and improve the health of the prairie.

After seeing what native prairie looked like, the tour moved on to a restoration area that had once been farm land. Viewing it from the access road, it wasn't what I had envisioned since my days as a student. It was not noticeably native, however, just a few steps in and the diversity became apparent.

One after an-



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Shootingstar
(*Dodecatheon conjugens*)

Continued on Page 5



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

A tour participant inspects a native plant in the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area.

Continued from Page 4

other, the plants that we saw at the nursery were spotted, along with a few additional native species.

While watching a butterfly flitter from one blanket flower to the next in a sea of native grasses and alfalfa, I couldn't help but think that the measure of restoration success is somewhat dependant on where you've been and where you're going.

Sure, this isn't the healthy native grassland we had just left, but it wasn't the broken land it once was either.

If you've never been to the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area, it's truly worth a visit. ✱



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*)

Celebrate our forests with a *free* tree

To commemorate 2011 as the International Year of Forests, the NPSS and the SaskPower Shand Greenhouse are giving away free tree and shrub seedlings to members.

The NPSS currently has 250 of each of the following: red osier dogwood, trembling aspen, plains cottonwood

and paper birch.

You are welcome to as many as you want,

subject to availability.

Each seedling is approximately 1 foot tall with a soil plug about 6 to 8 inches long that comes in a plastic sleeve. The seedlings should be planted as soon as possible. Growing instructions are included.

To request your seedlings, please email Chet Neufeld at info@npss.sk.ca with your name, address and the number and type of seedlings you want, or call Chet at 306-668-3940. ✱



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS • 2011



Blazing Star Wildflower Seed Company is your Saskatchewan source for native wildflower seeds, wildflower plugs, wedding favours, Education Kits, Gift Packs and more. Order from our online store at GrowWildflowers.com or write to Blazing Star, Box 382, Aberdeen, SK. S0K 0A0 for your free catalogue. Call 306-253-4219.

Exploring the plants of the boreal forest

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

As a way to celebrate 2011 as the International Year of Forests, the NPSS held a field tour in the boreal forest of Prince Albert National Park on June 18 and 19. And the majesty of one of the province's prettiest areas didn't disappoint.

The tour began with a visit to the Stony Meadow Plain in the fescue grasslands located along the Sturgeon River in the southwest corner of the park lead by Parks Canada employee Dusty Guedo. This area is rarely visited, so it was a real treat for participants to experience this unique area and the plants and animals that call it home. While we didn't see any of the bison herds or wolf packs that can roam the area, we were

treated to an amazing array of plant life in full bloom.

The group saw almost a 100 plant species, including my first look at bluets (*Houstonia longifolia*) and what is probably the most northerly location of Indian breadroot (*Psoralea esculenta*) in Saskatchewan. I also spotted a Virginia ctenucha moth (*Ctenucha virginica*), another first for me.

To add to the visual feast in front of us, Dusty also provided us with great information on the area such as recent efforts to reclaim an old gravel pit by planting fescue grass (*Festuca sp.*) plugs and new prescribed burning protocols to drive the advancing trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) back to promote the return of the fescue grasslands to their historical range. We also learned about the current efforts to bring increased visitation to the southwest corner of the park, and about developing a weed management plan to ensure that the habitat remains intact for years to come. In addition to plant-related projects, Dusty also spoke about the interaction between the local bison herds and the local wolf packs in the area, and showed maps from individuals that had been tracked

with satellites to show their movements.

The next day, we hiked the Narrows Peninsula Trail in the morning. The excursion took us through a variety of habitats, each with its own unique plant community. We visited areas of mixed forest (coniferous and deciduous) as well as riparian areas that included a small stream and parts of the Waskesiu Lake shoreline.

The highlights of this trail were the luxuriant fern beds filled with shoulder high ostrich ferns (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) as well as the colourful blooming plants that formed the forest understory. The forest was also ringing with birdsong



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

A boardwalk through the ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) along the Boundary Bog trail.



(Left) A purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) along the Boundary Bog trail in Prince Albert National Park. (Right) A newly emerged luna moth (*Actias luna*).



PHOTOS BY CHET NEUFELD

Continued on Page 7



Seneca snakeroot (*Polygala senega*)

PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Continued from Page 6

and we even noticed a luna moth (*Actias luna*) that had just emerged from its cocoon and was drying its wings.

On the drive back to Waskesiu, our group spotted elk, deer, a fox, a black bear and a wolf all along a short stretch of road. It was as if the park staff had put them on display just for us. Where else can you find all of this in one place?

In the afternoon we walked the circuit around the Boundary Bog. The walk starts out in mixed forest, then opens up for a panoramic view of the bog, with the stunted tamarack (*Larix laricina*) trees behind and the stained water of the bog in front. At some points the trail is actually a board walk, because if you tried to walk on the bog you'd literally sink up to your neck!

The highlight of the Boundary Bog trail was that the many pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *gibbosa*) in the bog were flowering. Pitcher plants are interesting anytime you see them, but it's even better when they grow their unusual, drooping flower. Although over 20 people registered for the trip, only 12 people showed up due to concerns about the weather, which was a shame since the rain during the trip was mostly limited to the nights making for a great outing.

For all of the areas we visited, we compiled comprehensive lists of all the plant species we found. These lists will add to the knowledge base of the park managers. To view these checklists, visit our website under the **News** tab. To see photos from the field trips, please visit our Facebook page.✱



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Bishop's cap (*Mitella nuda*)

Documenting life at the Northeast Swale

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director

The Northeast Swale, an area owned by the Meewasin Valley Authority on the outskirts of Saskatoon, is a small area that packs a big historical and biological punch!

The NPSS had the privilege to visit this half-section sized property on May 29 to be involved in a bioblitz to record the various plant and animal species that call this place home. We found the area, containing many wetlands and some impressive parcels of fescue prairie had a great diversity of life.

One of the highlights of the day for me was seeing all of the crowfoot violet (*Viola pedatifida*) in bloom. While it is normally somewhat rare in Saskatchewan, it was everywhere at the Northeast Swale, almost equal in number to the very common early blue violet (*Viola adunca*). Due to rain, many of the areas were carpeted in early bloomers such as golden bean (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*), three-flowered avens (*Geum triflorum*) and prairie onion (*Allium textile*). Also, crocuses (*Pulsatilla patens*) were in bloom in the hundreds in the areas recently burned by the MVA as part of a prairie rejuvenation project.

In addition to the plant tally, bird, mammal and insect counts were also being recorded. One of the highlights (and a first for me) was seeing a sora rail (*Porzana carolina*). These birds are usually heard and not seen, and even a keen birder can go their whole life without seeing this reclusive bird.

While the bioblitz was conducted by the MVA, it was promoted by the NPSS and most of the people who took part in the botanical survey were members. Although it was early in the season and the plants were a little behind due to the cold spring we had, we still managed to identify roughly 150 plant species in a single day!

In addition to containing many plant and animal species, the area also holds a lot of history.

Over the years, the area has seen settlers, served as a limestone quarry for the first buildings at the University of Saskatchewan and, before being acquired by the MVA, was home to a herd of cattle.

One of the most unusual sightings on the day was a camera crew that was on site the entire day getting footage to make a documentary about the bioblitz and the Northeast Swale. We'll keep you updated on when and where you can view this documentary when it's complete.

Because the Northeast Swale is less than 5 kilometres from my house, I'll continue to visit it throughout the summer, noting the various wildflowers blooming at the time. I encourage people in Saskatoon (or just passing through) to do the same as this is definitely a hidden gem that warrants more attention.

A comprehensive plant list was submitted to MVA managers in order to help them with management of the area. To view the checklist, visit our website under the **News** tab. To see photos, visit our Facebook page.✱



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Pictures and plants go together, naturally.

NPSS photo contest back for a third year

Time to get snapping! You only have until Oct. 31 to enter your photos in our contest!

This year's grand prize winner will receive a gift certificate from Mountain Equipment Co-Op. All winners will have their photo published in an edition of the *Native Plant News*.

The Categories are:

1. **Flora** (a photo of a whole plant)
2. **Close up** (a close-up photo of any plant part)
3. **Scenery** (photo of native landscapes)
4. **People and Plants** (photos illustrating relationships between people and Saskatchewan's native plants)

New this year we will have a People's Choice award. The photos will be posted on our Facebook page by Nov. 15 and you'll get to vote for the one you like the best.

The rules are simple:

1. Entries must be received by midnight on Oct. 31, 2011.
2. All photos must be taken in Saskatchewan.
3. There is no limit to the number of entries per person. However each photo can only be entered in one category. Only the photographer has the right to submit a photograph.
4. Digital photos must be of high quality (at least 300 dpi, jpeg files are preferred). Printed photos and slides will also be accepted, but you must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want them returned.
5. By entering the contest, the contestant grants the NPSS the one-time right to publish the photograph(s) and his or her name in an issue of *Native Plant News*, as well as to post it on the NPSS Facebook page for a limited time.
6. The NPSS Photo Contest is open to members only.

Mail your photo entries to the address on Page 2 of this newsletter or email them to info@npss.sk.ca. *

Corporate Members and Partners



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Agriculture



SaskPower

Powering the future



Nature
SASKATCHEWAN



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Highways and
Infrastructure



AGRICULTURE COUNCIL
OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.



EVERGREEN
COMMON GROUNDS
Imagine your city with nature



Meewasin

Saskatchewan
Prairie Conservation
Action Plan



SASKATCHEWAN
PARKS



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Environment



Saskatchewan
Watershed
Authority



**Prairie Plant
Systems Inc.**



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

Advertise in the *Native Plant News*



Contact the NPSS for rates at info@npss.sk.ca
or visit www.npss.sk.ca to view our rate card.

Grow your business, plant the seeds of success here.

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.
P.O. Box 21099
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5N9

TO:

Canada Publication Mail Agreement #40035909