



Native Plant News

Vol. 14, No. 1

Spring 2009

REGISTER NOW for the 2009 NPSS summer field tour at Grasslands National Park!



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Keynote speaker Heinjo Lahring speaks about growing water plants at the AGM.

AGM goes riparian

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director

Despite bitterly cold temperatures, the NPSS Annual General Meeting was once again a success. The event took place on March 6 and 7 at the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Club in Saskatoon. This year's theme was "Native Plants, Water and Us" and participants were treated to entertaining and engaging

speakers talking about various aspects of native plants and riparian areas.

Friday night started off with keynote speaker Heinjo Lahring from Bearberry Creek Water Gardens in Sundre, Alta., speaking about the value of native aquatic plants for restoration and gardening, and also about the challenges of running an aquatic plant nursery (who knew that surf boards could be a legitimate business expense?).

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Pres says it's time to step down

By *MICHEAL CHAMPION*
Outgoing NPSS President

Greetings NPSS members, the smells of spring are upon us – migratory birds are starting to make their return to Saskatchewan and it will not be long before the first blooms are here.



I have been reflecting back on when I first started with the board of directors some six years ago. Then, we had secured core funding from one of our partner agencies and we were focused on delivering sustained programming to our membership in the form of newsletters and tours.

As that funding source dried up, the board of directors made the decision to go outside and obtain small contracts. These contracts over the next five years have grown to include several partnerships with both

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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/Low Income \$15

Corporate \$200

Life \$500

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

Spring is in the air

It's time to PlantWatch!

By DEANNA TROWSDALE-MUTAFOV

PlantWatch Co-ordinator

Nature Saskatchewan

Spring is just around the corner, and PlantWatchers all over Saskatchewan will be getting outside and watching the flowers bloom!

I hope that you will become a PlantWatcher, find one or more of the 18 lovely native plants or 2 non-native plants on the PlantWatch list, watch and record the first bloom and help with climate change research.

Even one observation of one plant is a great contribution!

By signing up as a participant, you will receive two newsletters a year, including a datasheet, and you can receive other PlantWatch materials such as wall charts, posters, Canada in Bloom booklets, and brochures. I encourage individuals, school classrooms, and youth groups to get involved in this program.

I also have information on the other NatureWatch programs that may be of interest to young and adults alike – Frog-Watch, WormWatch and IceWatch. All of these monitoring

programs can be found on the website www.naturewatch.ca. Be sure to check them out!

Also, be sure to check out PlantWatch Saskatchewan on the Nature Saskatchewan website www.naturesask.ca, under Education and Monitoring.

PlantWatch Saskatchewan is one of the programs that will be highlighted in the new Grade 7 Saskatchewan Science textbook, sent to all Saskatchewan schools in the upcoming school year. Nationally, all of the Canadian PlantWatch Co-ordinators are hoping to have a PlantWatch Teacher's Guide completed in the near future and it should be available on the Nature Saskatchewan website after it is completed.

I am hoping to continue to take the PlantWatch and Climate Change message to schools, youth groups and community groups in Regina and area, and – with additional funding – I will take the message to more cities and towns on the Regina Plains.

Please contact me for more information, or to become a PlantWatch participant, at 780-9834 in Regina, 1-800-667-4668 outside of Regina or by e-mail at plant-watch@naturesask.ca.

If you know of a school, youth group or community group who would like a presentation, or if you know someone outside of Regina who may have an interest in presenting the PlantWatch PowerPoint presentation to groups, please also contact. Good luck with PlantWatching! 🌱



Advertise in the Native Plant News



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

Grow your business, plant the seeds of success here.



Calling all photographers

The NPSS is having a photo contest and you're invited to participate.

Just bring your camera with you on all of your outdoor journeys this summer and start snapping!

If it's plant-related, we want it; close-ups, landscapes, and anything in between. Winning submissions will be printed in a special full-colour photo spread issue of the *Native Plant News*.

Send your photos to Box 21099, Saskatoon, SK, S7H 5N9 or e-mail them to info@npss.sk.ca with the subject line "photo contest".

By submitting your photos, you are giving the NPSS permission to use them in the photo spread issue only. If you would like your photos returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. *

In search of the ram's head

NPSS board member John Hauer will be leading a day tour through the Maurice Street Wildlife Sanctuary on June 13.

The tour is tentatively scheduled to start at 10 a.m. from the Kentucky Freid Chicken at 121 Nipawin Road East in Nipawin. The Maurice Street Wildlife Sanctuary is approximately 17 km northwest of Nipawin, SK and is home to a diverse array of plants and animals, including the provincially-rare

Guidelines

- Photos must be taken in Saskatchewan.
- There is no limit to the number of photos that can be submitted.
- Photos taken with film cameras will be accepted, but digital photos are preferred.
- High-resolution (300 dpi or better) digital images are preferred. A good rule of thumb is that if the file size is over 1 MB, it is probably acceptable. Digital images must be a minimum of 5 inches long on their shortest edge. For each image, please send a caption stating what the photograph is of, the name of the person who took the photograph and the location the photo was taken. Please send digital images in TIFF, JPEG or GIF format.
- Don't crop photos.
- Don't embed images in files such as Word (.doc) or .pdf files. *

ram's head lady's slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*), which we hope to see blooming, as well as the large yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*), which we may also spot in bloom. More details will follow in the coming weeks.

There is no cost to attend this tour, but everyone must register so that we can plan accordingly. To register or for more information, please contact John Hauer at (306) 878-8812. *

Upcoming Events

April 2009

"Reclaiming the Abandoned Uranium Tailings at Gunnar Mines, Uranium City, Saskatchewan"

April 16

Public talk by Dr. Dennis W. Lawson
7 p.m., Frances Morrison Library
311-23rd St. East, Saskatoon

Earth Day

April 22

www.earthday.ca

May 2009

"Reclaiming the Abandoned Uranium Tailings at Gunnar Mines, Uranium City, Saskatchewan"

May 18

Public talk by Dr. Dennis W. Lawson
7:30 p.m., Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Regina

International Day for Biodiversity

May 22

<http://www.cbd.int/ldb/2009/?sec=ibd>

Nature Saskatchewan Spring Meet and 60th Anniversary Gala Evening

May 29 – 31

Regina and Govan, Sask.
Conexus Arts Centre, Regina
(306) 780-9273 or 1-800-667-4668
www.naturesask.ca

June 2009

NPSS Summer Field Tour Grasslands National Park

June 20

Grasslands National Park
Val Marie, Sask.
info@npss.sk.ca

"Discovering the Missouri Coteau" 2009 Native Prairie Appreciation Week

June 23 – 25

Moose Jaw

Daryl Nazar: (306) 569-0424
Trevor Lennox: (306) 778-8294

July 2009

4th National Stewardship & Conservation Conference

July 8 – 11

University of Calgary
www.stewardship2009.ca

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

AGM a success

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Afterward, we were treated to a few firsts – we screened the new, unreleased Hinterland Who's Who commercial on wetlands and launched Nora Stewart's book on growing native plants. The last item on Friday's agenda was the presentation of the Volunteer of the Year Award. This year's recipient was Candace Neufeld for her work not only with the board for five years, but also recently behind the scenes on just about every activity that the NPSS is involved with. Thanks again Candace for all of your hard work!

Saturday morning brought a new selection of speakers; Luc Delanoy spoke about the work of the Meewasin Valley Authority to restore a creek channel using native species after highway construction and Julie MacKenzie spoke about the efforts of the Frenchman Wood River Weed Management Area to reduce the occurrence and density of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) in the weed management area. Both speakers presented interesting results that sparked a session of thoughtful questions and discussion.

During lunch participants listened to a presentation by Bob Bors on his recent sabbatical trip to boreal forest regions across Canada in search of wild haskap, or honey-

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PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

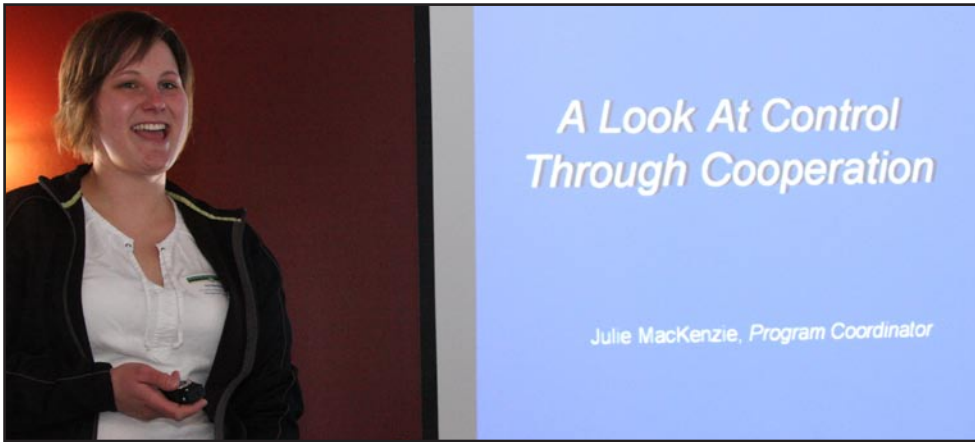
Bob Bors (centre, background) gives AGM participants a tour of the greenhouses at the University of Saskatchewan.



(Above) AGM participants have a "snack" – including cheeses, humus and gourmet pizza – during a break in presentations on Friday night. An ornamental tomato (left) being grown in the U of S greenhouse. This coleus (bottom) shows the intricate patterns and shapes that can be developed on just one leaf by breeders like Bob Bors.

PHOTOS BY DAVID FREEMAN





Julie Mackenzie, of the Wood River Weed Management Area, gives a presentation.

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suckle (*Lonicera caerulea*), to collect and use as breeding stock for the university's fruit program. We were also treated to tasty haskap berries and haskap jam!

After lunch, participants went on tours of the Fraser Herbarium and the university greenhouses where the haskap and thousands of other plants (native and exotic) are being raised. There's nothing better than strolling through a steamy greenhouse eating fresh fruit to kick those winter blues!

This year our annual general meeting attracted 47 people which was a slight increase from last year. We distributed evaluation forms to see how we did and the

response was great; all of the respondents thought that the theme, presenters and content were good to very good. Some mentioned that it was the best NPSS annual general meeting they had been to (and who am I to argue?!) We also had a number of suggestions for future themes/presentations, which we will try to make a reality.

Also, many commented that the next annual general meeting should be held in Regina. Given that our last annual general meeting was in Regina, we could be looking at a rotation between the two cities in future years. If

anyone has comments or questions regarding the meeting or our annual report, please e-mail me at info@npss.sk.ca or call (306) 668-3940. A big thank-you to everyone who helped to make this event a success and to those who attended – it was great seeing everyone again!

Author's note: the weather turned so bad after the event that our keynote speaker could only drive as far as Three Hills, Alberta before being storm-stayed. He reported a near-zero visibility blizzard and many accidents as a result of it. 🌪️

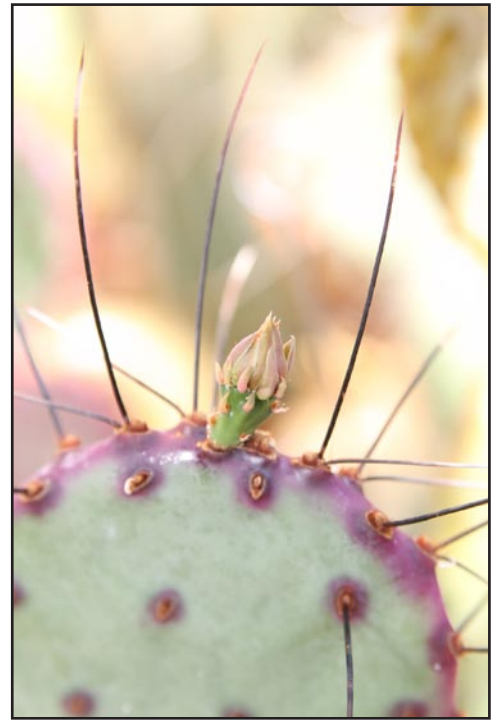


PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

One of the many cacti at the U of S on loan from a private collection.



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Heather Robison of the Canadian Wildlife Federation speaks about the national wildlife week theme "Our home and native plants" before screening the newest Hinterland Who's Who commercial at the AGM.



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Bob Bors sniffs lemon grass that he grows in the university greenhouse, before passing it on to AGM participants to smell.

A slippery little specimen

By CHET NEUFELD

NPSS Executive Director

Some of you may remember my favourite story, which was published in the last issue of the *Native Plant News*, entitled “Mysterious thismia still incognito”. Although this species occurred around the Chicago area, Saskatchewan also has its own disappearing act.

Back in the late 1800’s, explorer/naturalist David Macoun (nephew of the famous explorer/naturalist John Macoun of the Geological Survey of Canada) was in Saskatchewan near Indian Head when it is believed he found and collected a small white lady’s slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*) which eventually made its way to the national herbarium in Ottawa, where it still resides today.

Since David Macoun collected this specimen in 1895, no one has seen the small white lady’s slipper in Saskatchewan, despite at least one targeted search for it. Populations of the small white lady’s slipper still occur across the border near Brandon, Man., and two other broad occurrences northwest and southeast of Winnipeg. There are also existing populations in Ontario.

Saskatchewan would have been the most westerly location of this species in Canada. However, because the species has not been found in Saskatchewan for such a long time, it has been listed as extirpated from the province (four populations in Manitoba are thought to be extirpated as well). The plant is listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

Perhaps the best account of the small white lady’s slipper occurrence in Saskatchewan and of the specimen now resting at the national herbarium in Ottawa comes from John Hudson, a noted Saskatchewan botanist, in a communication to Tara Freeman – NPSS Vice-President and Rare Plant Rescue Co-ordinator for Nature Saskatchewan at the time. The following is an excerpt of his letter in 2005:

“Filed under *Cypripedium candidum* in the Fraser Herbarium at the University of Saskatchewan is a photocopy of this



PHOTOS COURTESY THOMAS G. BARNES AND THE USDA-NRCS PLANTS DATABASE

Small white lady’s slipper hasn’t been seen in Saskatchewan since 1895.

Macoun collection, bearing the date of June, 1895, and naming the collector as D. Macoun. In this folder is a several-page essay by (the late) A. J. Breitung and Bernard de Vries, in Breitung’s hand, tracing the history of the D. Macoun collection as far as known. From it we learn that David Macoun, after three field seasons with his uncle, those of 1879, 1880 and 1881, stayed west and took up land, homesteading SE ¼ 6-24-11-W2, (south of present-day Ituna) in 1883. David next surfaces as foreman in residence at the Experimental Farm in Indian Head from 1898 to 1903. He must have worked there in minor capacities for some while before being given the responsible job of foreman, though nothing is written on this matter.

“Breitung and de Vries thought that someone else collected the specimen and gave it to David, who as a Macoun would be thought to know what it might be. From him it passed to Dr. James Fletcher of the Experimental Farms Service, and then on to the herbarium of the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa, where it reposed until Dr. B. Boivin found it while collecting data for his *Flora of the Prairie Provinces*.

“My suggestion is that David collected the specimen himself while going by foot or horse to and fro between his homestead and Indian Head, the only place for getting supplies at that time. It would have been rash for him to give up the homestead before landing the full-time job at the Experimental Farm. In this commuting he would have to cross the Qu’Appelle Valley, which has many ravines containing springs

or ground-water seepages incised into its south bank. James M. Macoun³ makes it plain that *Cypripedium candidum* grows about groundwater seepages, from what he passes on from collectors’ accounts of its habitat. He wrote ‘Dr. James Fletcher found large numbers of this plant growing on hummocks on a damp prairie four miles south of Brandon, Man., in the beginning of July 1899. Mr. Norman Criddle also

collected the same plant at Creveme, Man., near the Douglas swamp about 50 miles east of Brandon.’

“Breitung and de Vries wrote that de Vries searched the Qu’Appelle Valley in modern times without finding small white lady’s slipper. But for rare plants one must know the exact habitat, as this writer can only too well testify. To this end one should remember that springs and groundwater seepages keep on giving out water during the winter, causing a build-up of ice around the spring. These can be spotted in April after most

of the snow melts. If one could survey the area in April by some means, entering ice accumulation on the 1:50,000 map, one would know in which ravines to try searching for small white lady’s slipper.”

There are many factors contributing to the disappearance of this beautiful native orchid in Saskatchewan.

First, much of the habitat that it would have grown on has either been developed or cultivated, or has been modified by other human disturbances. The area



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around Indian Head is much different now than it was in Macoun's time and most of the fertile land has been cultivated (there's good reason for the location of the experimental farm that Macoun worked at). Also, invasive species can be a problem; leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) currently threaten populations in Manitoba and leafy spurge is a problem in the historic range of the small white lady's slipper in Saskatchewan.

There are a few interesting tidbits regarding small white lady's slipper and its location in Saskatchewan. First, small white lady's slipper takes 13 years before it blooms, making it a long-lived species but one that requires a lot of time to reproduce by seed. There is only one flower per stem, although the plant can reproduce vegetatively through short rhizomes. Another interesting detail is that the experimental farm that Macoun worked at still exists today in the form of the PFRA Shelterbelt Center.

For any of you who attended the 2008 NPSS summer field tour, you'll remember that Cherry Lake is just south of the Shelterbelt Center. For those of you who didn't attend the summer field tour, no, we didn't find any small white lady's slipper. We were looking in appropriate habitats for it, but were too late in the season to see it in bloom (and unless it's in bloom it is very inconspicuous as the leaves blend in very well with the surrounding vegetation).

Being an eternal optimist, I'm hopeful that someday someone will stumble onto a small white lady's slipper while hiking through the coulees of the Qu'Appelle Valley. For more information on the small white lady's slipper, go to the COSEWIC website at www.cosewic.gc.ca and enter the species name in their search engine or call the Canadian Wildlife Service at (306) 975-4101. To view a copy of the Indian Head specimen of small white lady's slipper, contact the Fraser Herbarium at (306) 966-4968. ✱

References:

1. *Autobiography of John Macoun*, M.A. Ottawa, the Ottawa Field. Naturalists Club, 1922. x+305 pp.
2. G.S.C. Annual Report, new series, Vol. VIII, 1895. Report A, Summary Report of the Geological Survey Department for the year 1896 [sic-should read 1895] by the Director, pp 141A-148A.
3. James M. Macoun, "Contributions to Canadian Botany XVI", in the *Ottawa Naturalist* 16(11), 211-223, (1903). *Cypripedium candidum* is on p. 221.



Read all about it!

NPSS member Nora Stewart unveiled her new book *Cultivating Our Roots: Growing Authentic Prairie Wildflowers and Grasses* at the AGM in March. The book will soon be available through the NPSS. Also, Trevor Harriot, also launched his own book – *Grass, Sky, Song: Promise and Peril in the World of Grassland Birds* – on the same weekend in Regina. Look for it at local book stores or contact the NPSS.

PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

NPSS president steps aside

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the federal and provincial governments. Our biggest contract to date was the half a million dollars we received from Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment three years ago.

Being sought after for contract work by Ministry departments and being trusted by federal agencies to deliver programs is something that each NPSS member should be proud of.

While we have focused on program delivery for other agencies, we have also been involved in native plant re-vegetation work with several schools in Regina and Saskatoon

I was asked to come on the Board by an old and dear friend of mine, and past executive director, Garth Wruck. Garth was working for the NPSS for about a year when he asked me to come on board. As his career ambitions changed with his growing family, he resigned and the board hired Chet Neufeld, not a stranger to the NPSS at all. These two executive directors are two of the most dedicated individuals I have had the pleasure and privilege to work with.

Our Society is providing leadership in invasive species management right now. We are still actively working with provincial and federal governments

along with a host of partner agencies. And while the ebbs and flows of soft dollars continue to affect how and what we are able to deliver to our membership, we must always keep in mind that your board is working to ensure that the NPSS stays afloat through these financial uncertainties.

While the NPSS is not a lobby group – which is also a reason why we are trusted to deliver non-biased programming for other agencies – the board is working to deliver the message that native places need to be kept and maintained for future generations.

The past six years have been a blast, working with and for you. I thank you for your continued dedication to the society and to your board. I look forward to working with the incoming board of directors and the new president – who must still be determined by the board, with my help of course.

As always, I am reminded of this truth: In time, board members retire or move on. The strength of any society always has and will lie in its membership. Our membership remains dedicated to native habitats and the work that we do, for that I am thankful. ✱

Board Member Profile

Sarah James works for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, and has worked with the Ministry in several capacities since 2003.

She earned a B.Sc. Honours in Biology from the University of Regina in 2000, an M.Sc. in Ecology from the University of Windsor in 2002, and a Diploma in Endangered Species Management from the University of Kent in 2004. Sarah is proud to have been Wildlife Preservation Canada's New Noah for 2004-2005, learning and working in Jersey and Mauritius.

Sarah's research, work and volunteer experience includes native plant species interactions, reptile behavior and habitat use, breeding birds surveys, land cover mapping, fish and zooplankton population monitoring, wildlife surveys, water sampling, outreach programming, hands-on care of a population of critically endangered passerines, ecological impacts of invasive species, regional environmental studies, and environmental assessment – all of which she has worked on with passion and enthusiasm.

As an avid hiker and backpacker, Sarah has enjoyed Canada's wilderness throughout her life, as well as native habitats in areas around the world. She's pleased to now be exploring closer to home and has a great (and growing) appreciation for Saskatchewan's native species and areas.

Sarah has served on the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan board since 2008, and on the Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council since its inception.✱



Corporate Members and Partners



Register for summer tour

The NPSS summer field tour will take place on June 20 in Grasslands National park at Val Marie, Sask. – (see special *NPN* insert).

Don't miss your chance

to tour the park and see rare native plants and animals.

Contact Chet Neufeld at 306-668-3940 or e-mail info@npss.ca for more information and to register.

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