



Native Plant News

Vol. 15, No. 1

Spring 2010

Botany Blitz In the Cypress Hills

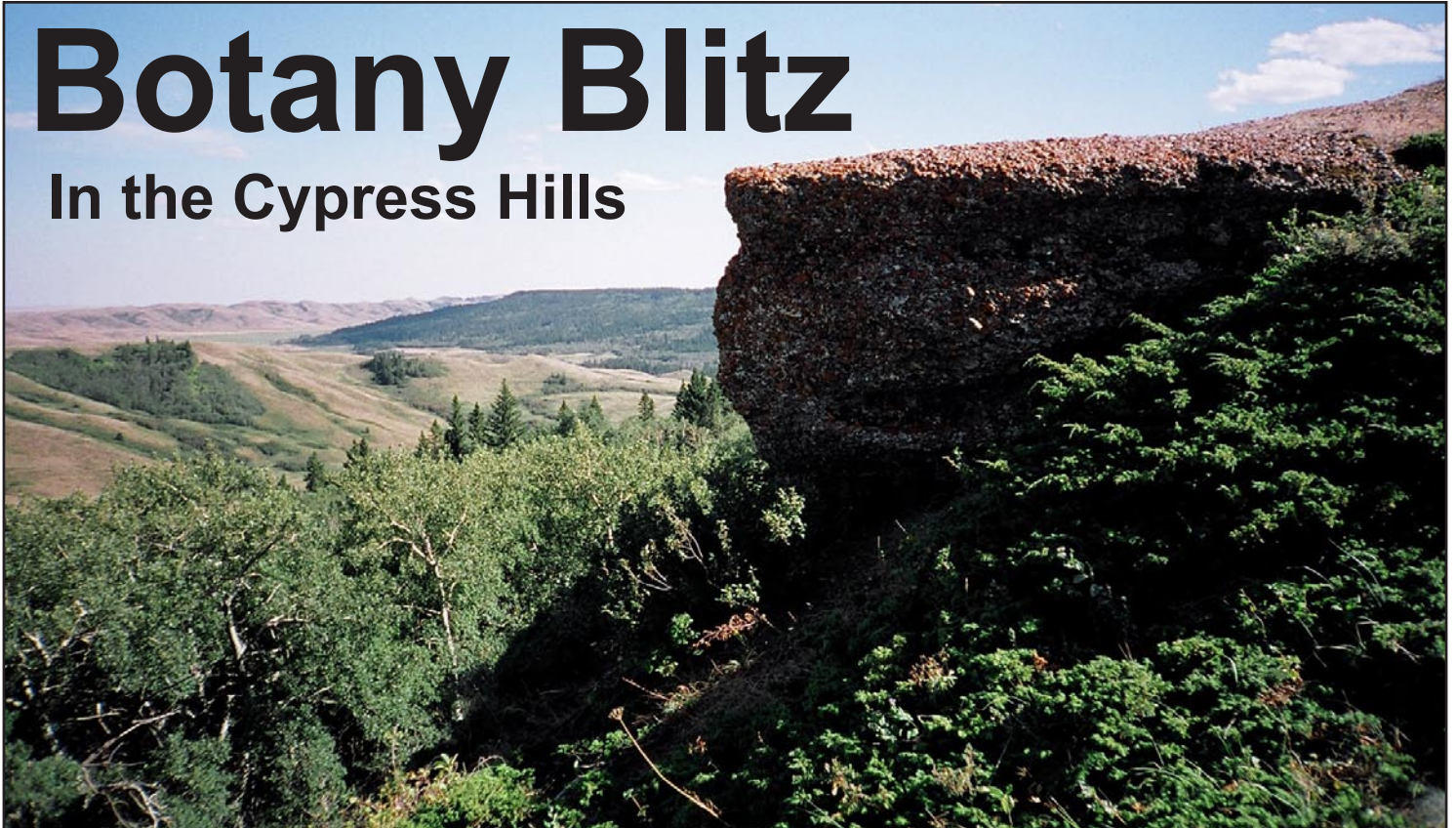


PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

The NPSS summer field tour and connected events will take place in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park on July 2, 3 and 4.

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS executive director

Join the NPSS on Saturday, July 3, in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park for a fun day of botanizing and socializing.

This annual event is for people of all ages and abilities, and is always a favourite – last year's tour was our best attended ever and we're hoping to break the record again this year.

We'll be visiting various parts of the park and doing short hikes (mostly on trails) through different habitats, such

as riparian (wetlands, creeks and lakes), pine/spruce forests, fescue grassland and meadows.

Along the way, we'll be trying to identify and record as many plant species as we can find, which is where the Botany Blitz in the Hills comes into play. This is your chance to be a citizen scientist, as all of our data is submitted to park managers to help them with their work in the park.

If you don't know much about plants, that's not a problem! We'll have lots of experts around to teach you.

You'll also learn about the unique geology and history of the area as the Cypress Hills are a unique area in Saskatchewan and the highest point between the Rockies and the Labrador Peninsula. In fact, the hills are roughly as high as the town site of Banff! Because of this, it is home to plants species found nowhere else in Saskatchewan. There are very few places anywhere that you can experience such a diversity of habitats in such a small area.

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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.

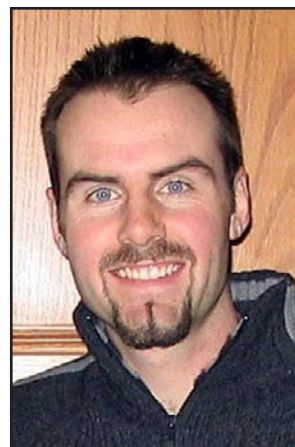
A message from the NPSS executive director

Happy spring to everyone!

I think I speak for most of you when I say that we've had enough of winter and that we're glad that spring has finally sprung. Depending on where you live, you may have experienced some unusual weather.

Here in Saskatoon we had days above twenty degrees, days near freezing, lashing winds, snow and rain.

However, despite this many of our spring plants have made their appearance.



I first noticed crocuses popping up in my yard around April 2, but they didn't flower until about a week later. Ingrid Thiessen reported seeing crocuses around April 12 in Regina.

I propose we have a little contest: if anyone has seen crocuses blooming earlier than April 12 let me know. In the next issue, I'll report the winner along with the date that they saw them.

Keeping track of flowering dates like this can be more than entertaining; it can also add valuable information to a growing database that is being used by scientists to monitor climate change and predict future trends. That's why programs like PlantWatch are so important. They involve "citizen scientists" in gathering data that would otherwise be too difficult and expensive to obtain.

I encourage everyone to get involved in PlantWatch. It's easy and even one observation is a good contribution. If you're interested, read more about the program in the PlantWatch article (on page 6).

Although our Native Prairie Appreciation Initiative has wrapped up, I would still like to keep the momentum from that going. The initiative was launched in part to get people outdoors and active in our natural habitats to enjoy and appreciate them more. It was hoped that by involving people in wilderness, that they would become more passionate about them and make a greater effort to preserve them.

For our part, the NPSS is hosting its annual field trips again: one will visit the Cypress Hills on the Canada Day long weekend, while another is planned for late summer or early fall in the Moose Mountain area.

However, I don't want anyone to wait for these trips to make their first foray into the wilderness. Get out as soon and as often as you can! There is plenty to do – hike, bike, walk, take pictures, bird watch and brush up on your botany skills. If you happen to see, photograph or experience anything of interest please don't hesitate to send it to me. We'd love to share it in the newsletter.

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Natives invade the urban jungle at AGM



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Participants at the 2010 NPSS Annual General Meeting learn how to use native plants in an urban setting.

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS executive director

The NPSS Annual General Meeting is always a member favourite and this year was no different.

It was held at the Conexus Centre of the Arts in Regina on Feb. 5 and 6, and attracted about 70 people. This year's theme was Going Wild in Town – Native Plants in Urban Areas.

Friday night started with a presentation by keynote speaker John Morgan of Prairie Habitats in Manitoba. He is a veteran of prairie restoration who inspired us all with his talk, Restoring Our Prairie Heritage, and shared with us examples of his work, describing the techniques and plants he used.

Following John's talk was a wine and cheese social, slide show of member's photos and the Volunteer of the Year Award. This year's recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award went to Beverly Bazowski, who has tirelessly promoted the NPSS, volunteered to sit at our booth and graciously hosted events on her native prairie acreage.

Saturday morning kicked off with breakfast and the business portion of the annual general meeting, followed by an update by the Flora of Saskatchewan Association. After a brief coffee break, presentations resumed with Case Studies in Urban Uses of Native Plants,

presented by Melissa Ranalli and Sarah Vinge who discussed green roofs, Keith Barr who shared experience on landscaping with native plants and Natalie Walliser from the City of Regina who discussed on the establishment of the McKell Conservation Area.

Over lunch, attendees learned of the NPSS' Voluntary Codes of Conduct program, which aims to stop the spread of invasive horticultural plants by bringing producers and users of plants together to discontinue their use.

Saturday afternoon began with a presentation by Doug Cattani of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, who presented research on determining the feasibility of native grasses for use as turfgrass. Following this presentation, Lauren Rama of Eco-Yards in Calgary gave participants a workshop on how to sustainably and environmentally landscape their yards with native plants.

This event was the first time anyone had thoroughly discussed the uses and importance of native plants in an urban context, and judging from our evaluation survey and comments from participants, it was very well received.

If you weren't there, you missed a good one! Oh well, there's always next year, right?

Thanks to the AGM planning committee and all who attended for making it such a success!

Upcoming Events

July 2010

Lichen Identification Workshop

July 10 and 11

Devonian Botanical Gardens
Edmonton, Alta.

This two-day workshop consists of a practical and theoretical introduction to lichen identification. The workshop focuses on learning lichen morphology and terminology; students will be introduced to some of the common lichens. The registration and payment deadline is July 2.

Email nadine98fox@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.aspb.ab.ca/events>

Saskatoon Prairie Bioblitz

Tuesday, July 27

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Asquith, Sask.

Accomplished botanists and ecologists will help the Nature Conservancy of Canada learn more about the plants and wildlife that call the Asquith North property home! You must register to participate

<http://www.natureconservancy.ca>

Rare Plant Survey Techniques Workshop

July 28 to 30

Saskatoon, Sask.

If you're a professional who conducts, contracts, or supervises rare plant survey projects, and any individual seeking professional development in rare plant survey project planning, execution, and reporting, then you'll find value in this course.

www.npss.sk.ca

August 2010

Bison Grunt at Old Man on his Back

August 20 and 21

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Frontier, Sask.

At this unique event you might meet a Bison! Help NCC upgrade the Bison handling facility and assist with site clean-up at the Old Man on His Back Prairie and Heritage Conservation Area. This is a two day event, but please sign up for the second day separately.

Contact Jennipher Karst
(866) 622-7275 ext. 229

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.

Nursery needs some loving care



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan volunteers make quick work of weeding at the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery.

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director

Volunteers required all summer

Calling All Volunteers!
Do you like getting some fresh air, learning about native plants and meeting great people? If so, volunteering in our nursery could be for you!

The Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery is located in the back of the Riverside Memorial Park Cemetery off Assiniboine Avenue in Regina. It is a joint project between the NPSS and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

The nursery has approximately 70 species of prairie plants, all grown from seed collected from the Regina Plain Landscape Area, with the goal of preserving the genetic diversity of the area and also to serve as a seed source for future restoration projects.

We will be organizing work bees at

When do we need your help?

The tentative itinerary (weather dependent) is:

Tuesday **June 29**, 9 a.m. – noon – weeding

Tuesday **July 6**, 9 a.m. to noon – weeding

Saturday **July 10**, 9 a.m. to noon – weeding

Tuesday **July 13**, 9 a.m. to noon – weeding

Tuesday **July 20**, 9 a.m. to noon – weeding

Tuesday **July 27**, 9 a.m. to noon – weeding

Tuesday **Aug. 3**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

Saturday **Aug. 7**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

Tuesday **Aug. 10**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

Tuesday **Aug. 17**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

Tuesday **Aug. 24**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

Tuesday **Aug. 31**, 9 a.m. - noon – weeding

the nursery throughout the summer to help with weeding, cleaning, and gen-

eral maintenance.

You are welcome to attend as many weekends as you like and are also encouraged to visit whenever you have free time, although we'd like you to attend one orientation session first so that you can learn the ropes.

You are encouraged to bring work gloves, sturdy footwear, mosquito repellent, appropriate clothing, sun block, and a rake if possible. We'll have some refreshments on hand.

We thank all those who have already made it out to the nursery this year. Hopefully you can make it out again. For those of you who haven't made it out yet, we look forward to seeing you.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the work bees, please contact Chet Neufeld at (306) 668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca.

NPSS projects update

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

The NPSS is always busy and the last year has been no exception!

Although you may not realize it, the NPSS is heavily involved in project work varying from small presentations to large initiatives at the provincial and federal level.

Do you ever wonder where your membership dues go?

Well most of them go to producing the newsletter and other membership-based materials and events, but they also help leverage funding from other sources.

How much funding was the NPSS able to leverage last year you ask? Over \$180,000! Your dues do a lot; here's a snapshot of a few of this things we've been up to.

Over the past year, the society sat on six different committees including the Lakeland College programming advisory board, the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, and the National Invasive Alien Plant Working Group, for which we are the provincial representative and presented at a conference in Vancouver earlier this year. We were also the provincial representative at a forum on invasive species hosted by senior officials of Environment Canada in Ottawa in April. We also formed, and currently chair, the Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council.

As a society, we also launched the Native Prairie Appreciation Initiative, a series of events and materials aimed at getting people out into our natural habitats to enjoy, value and protect them. Initiative events included an outdoor photo workshop in Saskatoon, field trips to Grasslands National Park and the Maurice Street Nature Sanctuary and the annual general meeting. This program was so successful that we won an award from the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

The NPSS also mapped and removed the invasive flowering rush from its only known population in Saskatchewan.

We hosted a three day workshop to instruct professionals on the proper survey methodologies for rare plants.

The society introduced the Voluntary Codes of Conduct last year, designed to prevent invasive horticultural plants from escaping into natural areas. The codes encourage greenhouses to discontinue growing or selling these plants and educate gardeners and other user groups on the dangers of invasive horticultural plants. The hope is that they stop buying them and insist on environmentally-friendly alternatives.

The program will continue indefinitely and if you would like to participate, you can download the forms off our website (www.npss.sk.ca/?s=5.projects). It's easy and free! Best of all, you will be making a difference by helping to prevent the future escape of environmentally and economically damaging invasive plants.

The NPSS updated its website and added a wealth of new material, including an online store (read more on Page 6). The website will continue to be regularly updated so check back often for the latest on society events and news.

Over the last year, we developed fact sheets, decision matrices and a workshop on selected invasive plants for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

We also delivered presentations on a range of topics to school and youth groups, professionals and the public, both in Saskatchewan and across Canada. We also received nearly 500 requests for information on various topics related to native plants, mostly from the public.

The NPSS also monitored the establishment of a native grass seed mix along highway 219 from Saskatoon to Beaver Creek for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. Last year was the second year for the project, and the site showed good progress. This site is the crown jewel of



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Prairie crocus (*Anemone patens*)

the ministry's revegetation projects, and many different techniques were used to help restore the site.

Most recently, we were selected to be Saskatchewan's "biodiversity champion" by the Canadian Environmental Network to generate a report on all of the environmental initiatives relating to Earth Day and the International Year of Biodiversity (read more on Page 8) in Saskatchewan.

This year promises to be just as busy as we have gravel pathways and other work to complete in the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery (read more on Page 4), a market assessment of the native plant industry, the final year of monitoring the native grass establishment along highway 219, more removal and monitoring of flowering rush, another rare plant survey techniques course to host and another project that is awaiting approval.

If you have any questions about any of our completed or ongoing projects, or have an idea for one, please contact Chet Neufeld at (306) 668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca.

Photo contest is back

The Annual Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Photo Contest is back!

This year's grand prize winner will have their photo put on a real Canada Post stamp. The winner will receive a sheet of 20 stamps with their photo on them, along with an enlarged keepsake stamp bearing their photo. The stamps are legal. The NPSS will be selling stamp sheets of the winning photo later in the season. All other winners will get their photo published in an upcoming edition of the *Native Plant News*.

The Categories are:

1. **Flora** (a photo of a whole plant)
2. **Close up** (a photo of any plant part such as a flower, leaf, or fruit)
3. **Scenery** (photo of native landscapes)
4. **People and Plants** (photos illustrating relationships between people and Saskatchewan's native plants)

The rules are simple:

1. Entries must be received by Sept. 30, 2010.
2. All photos must be taken in



PHOTO BY CHRIS HENDRICKSON

Society members participate in a photography workshop.

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 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*.

6. The NPSS Photo Contest is open to members of the Society only.

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

Spring flowers are blooming

By DEANNA TROWSDALE-MUTAFOV
PlantWatch Saskatchewan
Coordinator

PlantWatch Saskatchewan, delivered through Nature Saskatchewan, is looking for volunteer plantwatchers to watch select plants bloom this spring.

While enjoying the great outdoors, all you have to do as a plantwatcher is find one

(or more) of the selected 18 native plants or two

non-native plants in your area, watch and record the first bloom, and submit the results. Even one observation of one plant is a great contribution!

The data collected over time is used to monitor how plants are responding to changes in our climate, where the changes are taking place and at what rate these changes are occurring. Scientists believe climate change is affecting blooming times across Canada, and that this trend will continue.

PlantWatch enables "citizen scientists" of all ages and skill levels to get involved in this important climate change research program. There is no charge to sign up as a participant, and you will receive two newsletters per year and a datasheet to record your results. Other PlantWatch materials, such as a wall chart, poster (in French and English), *Canada in Bloom* booklet, and brochure, are available to the general public. Individuals, schools, Guide and Scout troops and groups of all types are encouraged to participate. Check out www.plantwatch.ca for more details on the program.

To receive information on the PlantWatch program call Deanna at 306-780-9273 or 1-800-667-4668 (Sask. only), or by email at plantwatch@naturesask.ca.



Online store open for business

By now you should all be familiar with the new NPSS website (www.npss.sk.ca). However, if you haven't visited in a few weeks you may not realize that our website now has an online store!

Not only can you buy merchandise such as art prints, books and water bottles, but you can also pay for event registration costs (such as our upcoming Rare Plant Survey Techniques Course) and purchase memberships. Yes – you can now renew your membership online!

All payments are secure and made through a third party site

(PayPal) and shipping costs are automatically calculated, saving time and guesswork.

Our online store makes it faster and more convenient to get what you need, when you need it.

You'll notice for each item there is a small surcharge (roughly 3 per cent) to compensate for bank charges on credit card transactions. Of course you can still buy everything that's on our website with a good old cheque in the mail and save yourself the surcharge.

Please visit the website regularly as we add new announcements, projects, publications and store items often.

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Summer tour

Continued from Page 1

If you've never been there, this is your perfect opportunity to visit, and for those of you who have, you know that you can never visit this place too often.

As an added bonus, our events on Saturday tie in with a whole series of events hosted by other organizations with which the NPSS has partnered.

On Friday, July 2, The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Adopt-A-Plant Alberta are hosting its Botany Alberta Border X event. This day is similar in format and focus to the NPSS tour, but will take place on the Alberta side of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. If you think the Alberta side is more or less the same as the Saskatchewan side, think again. There are a lot of different features and activities, so why not come for both days?

In fact, why not stay until Sunday, July 4? If you do, you'll be treated to one of the finest prairie areas anywhere in Saskatchewan, if not Canada. In cooperation with the NPSS, the NCC – Saskatchewan will be hosting a day at Old Man on His Back. The former ranch of Peter and Sharon Butala, the area is a pristine prairie area that supports a population of bison. Old Man on His Back is only a short drive from the park and is well worth the trip. If you'd rather hang around Cypress for a while longer, Botany Alberta folk will be holding a half-day excursion in the Park ending at noon on Sunday.

IMPORTANT: All events are free. However, please register ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly. **For each day you want to attend, please contact the appropriate organization (listed below).** Also, due to the timing of this event on the long weekend, it is suggested that you book accommodations as soon as possible.

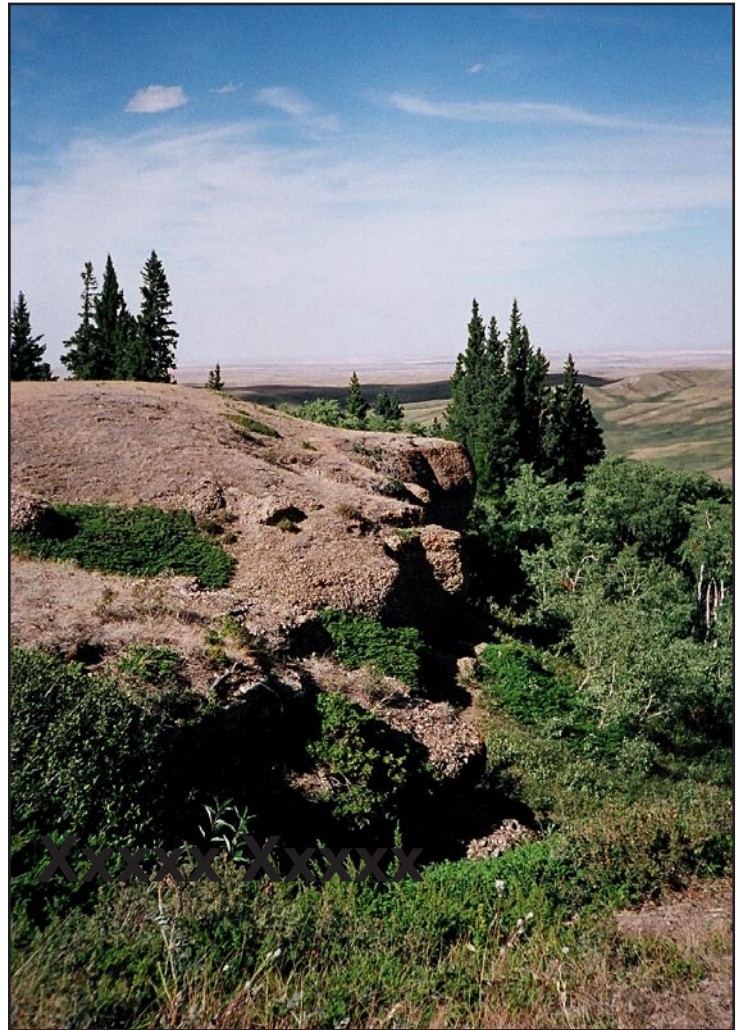


PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

The conglomerate cliffs in Cypress Hills Interprovincial park.

What to bring and where to stay

What to bring: sturdy footwear, binoculars, camera, rain gear, food and drinks. There is a grocery store on both sides of the park and several restaurants.

Where to stay: Both the Saskatchewan and Alberta sides have hotels, as does Maple Creek, Sask., just outside the park. Medicine Hat is less than an hour's drive from the Alberta side and Swift Current is an hour and a half from the Saskatchewan side.

If you have not reserved a campsite, arrive early as space is limited.

Accommodations in the park:

- **Alberta: Elkwater Lake Lodge;** Elkwater, Alta. For reservations call 1-888-893-3811 or email info@elkwaterlakelodge.com. www.elkwaterlakelodge.com
- **Saskatchewan: Cypress Park Resort Inn;** Cypress town site, Sask. For reservations call (306) 662-4477. <http://cpri.sasktelwebhosting.com>

EVENT DETAILS AND REGISTRATION

Botany Alberta Border X
July 2 and July 4
8:30 a.m.

Elkwater, Alta.

NCC-Alberta has booked the Main Group Campsite at Elkwater arriving July 1 and departing July 4. **There are 13 tent sites and six RV sites available at cost.** There will be drinks and snacks during the day and after-dinner s'mores. If staying in Alberta, meet and greets will take place Thursday evening at 6 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the fire pit located at the group camp site.

Contact: Robin McLeod (403) 444-3547
robin.mcleod@natureconservancy.ca
www.natureconservancy.ca

NOTE: Due to the flooding in south-western Saskatchewan and southeastern Alberta, access to one or more event sites may be limited or unavailable.

Botany Blitz in the Hills
July 3

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park Visitor Centre, Cypress Hills townsite, Sask. Sights include Loch Leven, Bald Butte and Lookout Point. In the afternoon we will visit the West Block via the gap road (weather permitting) and see the Conglomerate Cliffs, Adams Lake and (time permitting) Fort Walsh and the Mystery Rocks.

Contact: Chet Neufeld 306-668-3940
info@npss.sk.ca
<http://www.npss.sk.ca>

Plains Bison and Prairie Wildflowers
July 4

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Frontier, Sask.

Host: Nature Conservancy of Canada
Spend time identifying plant species at Old Man on his Back, then stay for the guided tour of the famous ranch.

Contact: Jennipher Karst 306-347-0447 ext. 229, jennipher.karst@natureconservancy.ca
www.natureconservancy.ca



Celebrating diversity

The United Nations declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). It is an opportunity for everyone to host activities and events that raise the global profile of biodiversity.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth and the patterns it forms, all living things, the places they inhabit and the interactions between them. The world is an interconnected whole. Our survival is absolutely dependent on the safeguarding of biodiversity. Human activity is causing the diversity of life on earth to be lost at a greatly accelerated rate. These losses can be prevented.

Decisions being made at the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP 10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will take place in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 stand to impact the future of biodiversity. The CBD, established at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, is an international treaty with 3 main goals:

- the conservation of biological diversity
- the sustainable use of its components
- the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources

At COP 6 in 2002, our world leaders agreed to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. Now in 2010, it is evident that this target was not met. At COP 10 this year our world leaders will decide on new targets and a new strategic plan for the next 10 years. It will take commitment from every citizen of the planet to conserve biodiversity.

Canadian environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) in Canada play a key role in ensuring that Canada reaches its targets.

The NPSS has many initiatives in 2010 that support the mandate of the International Year of Biodiversity, such as the native seed nursery in Regina, our publications, and our field tours and workshops. The NPSS is committed to promoting and protecting biodiversity, and encourages everyone to get involved in local initiatives that do the same. We can all make a difference!

For more information on the International Year of Biodiversity and related programming in Canada, visit www.cen-rce.org.

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