



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Native Plant News

Vol. 18, No. 1



www.npss.sk.ca



Spring 2013

SUMMER FIELD TOURS 2013



Four Corners OF SASKATCHEWAN

Story on Page 3

2

Native Prairie
Appreciation
Week

4

NPSS AGM
another
success

5

Fire a long-time
partner on the
prairie landscape

6

Executive
Director's
report

NPSS Board of Directors

**President:**

Shelley Heidinger 306-634-9771

Past-President

Tara Sample 306-777-9137

Vice-President:

John Hauer 306-463-5507

Treasurer:

Cheri Sykes 306-924-8028

Secretary:

Sarah James 306-780-6121

Directors:

Leanne Heisler 306-757-5729

Jennifer Lohmeyer 306-787-8707

Sarah Vinge 306-780-9417

Nadia Mori 306-946-3219

Executive Director:

Chet Neufeld 306-668-3940

Newsletter Editor:

David Freeman 306-791-0047

NPSS Address:

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

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

Phone: 306-668-3940 Fax: 306-668-3940

Email: info@npss.sk.ca Website: www.npss.sk.caTwitter: @NPSS_SK www.facebook.com/npss.sk

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.

Native Prairie Appreciation Week

To celebrate the 15th annual Native Prairie Appreciation Week (NPAW) and a decade of the Saskatchewan Pasture School, a tour based out of Weyburn featuring the Big Muddy Badlands region will be held on June 18 and 19.

This year, the event will feature both common and concurrent sessions during classroom presentations and field exercises. Day one begins in Weyburn, with buses departing for field tours in the Big Muddy Badlands. Day two offers classroom presentations in Weyburn. Topics and tour stops for ranchers include a look at soil profiles and properties, weed management, watering systems, native pasture management, tame pasture rejuvenation, plant identification, and winter feeding site management. Stops for resource agency staff and naturalists include a visit to a local coal mine, mine site reclamation, rare plant and species-at-risk management and the "infamous" plant identification competition. The two-day event is filled with hands-on learning, both in the classroom and the field. Participants also get many opportunities to network.

Attendance is limited to 100 people so please register early. The cost is \$190 for producers and Society for Range Management members, and \$250 for professional and agency staff.

A detailed agenda and the registration form are available on the Saskatchewan Forage Council website at www.saskforage.ca and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

Contact Nadia Mori, Regional Forage Specialist, Watrous at 306-946-3219 or nadia.mori@gov.sk.ca, or the Saskatchewan Forage Council at 306-969-2777 or office@saskforage.ca. *

Native plant, seed sources

With warmer weather finally here, your thoughts have probably turned to all things green and growing.

If you're looking to buy or sell native plant materials, the NPSS should be your first stop. One of our most popular resources is our annually updated Native Plant Material and Services Supplier List.

The list has all of the native seed and plant providers in Western Canada, as well as those who supply related services such as seed cleaning and testing. It also has a species appendix at the back in case you're looking for something in particular. You can find this document on our website www.npss.sk.ca and clicking on the **Info Resources** tab at the top of the page.

Secondly, there's the online Native Plant Sources Listing Service. This works like an online classified ad, where users can post ads looking for native plants or seeds and providers can post ads selling native plants and seeds. People providing or looking for native plant-related services are also welcome to post ads.

Best of all, it's free for members and you can post as many ads as you'd like! Find it on our website by clicking on the tab marked **Native Plant Sources** at the top of the page.

Happy planting! *

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.

Mark your calendars



PHOTO BY PVERDONK

Ram's Head Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*).

The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan is once again gearing up for our exciting field tours.

This year we are organizing four field tours in each inhabited corner of the province.

Each of these field tours will offer something unique and give participants a chance to see and do things that they wouldn't otherwise be able to on their own.

Northwest Corner - June 30 and July 1

This tour will be held in the area around Turtle Lake, Sask. Participants will see a variety of habitats and species, including wetlands, lakes (including saline lakes) forests, sand hills and meadows. We will undoubtedly see a flush of summer wildflowers, and will also get a chance to see unique and rare plants such as moonworts (*Botrychium* spp.) and elephanthead (*Pedicularis groenlandica*).

Southwest Corner - June 22 and 23

This tour will explore the West Block of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park with a mission: to find historical occurrences of two rare plant species - cut-leaved alumroot (*Heuchera parvifolia* var. *dissecta*) and woolly gromwell (*Lithospermum ruderale*). These species have only been found in two locations in Saskatchewan and (where we will be looking) haven't been seen in over 30 years. We will try to relocate these species and will also collect information to submit to the Conservation Data Centre. Even if we don't find these species, we will be in one of the most scenic areas of the province and will surely find many interesting plants flowering. Due to its location and elevation, Cypress Hills contains plant species and habitat types found nowhere else in Saskatchewan.

What they have in common though, is that they are geared for all ages and experience levels, and that they will be interesting and fun!

The tours are two days in length, but you can choose to stay for as long or as little as you like.

All tours are free, but please contact Chet Neufeld at 306-668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca to register so that we can plan accordingly.

Northeast Corner - June 15 and 16

This tour will be held in the Hudson Bay, Sask., area. Participants will be treated to some of the finest examples of southern boreal forest in the province, as well as a treasure trove of biodiversity and rare and beautiful plants. We hope to relocate the only occurrence of swamp saxifrage (*Micranthes pensylvanica*) with only 1 known plant in the entire province. We also have a chance of seeing beautiful orchids such as the ram's head lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium arietinum*), dragon's mouth (*Arethusa bulbosa*), and other delicate wildflowers like the northern white violet (*Viola macloskeyi*) and moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*).

Southeast Corner - July 13 and 14

This tour will take in the sights of the Estevan area. Some of the activities will include a tour of mine reclamation sites, the Shand Greenhouse (which grows native plants) as well as various habitats from rugged badlands to the lush Souris River. We will also get a chance to see buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), a rare plant in Canada that makes its only Saskatchewan appearance in the Estevan area. 🌱

Upcoming Events

May 2013

Flower and Macro Photography workshop

Sunday, May 26

Ancient Spirals Retreat
Saskatoon, Sask.

Led by a Saskatoon-based biologist and nature photographer Dr. Branimir Gjetvaj, this workshop will cover photography techniques to help you produce beautiful and unique images of flowers in a natural setting.

Registration fee: \$65 per person
www.branimirphoto.ca/workshops

June 2013

Nature Conservancy of Canada – Buffalo Valley Bio-Blitz

June 1

Dinsmore, Sask.

Contact Joseph Kotlar
306-347-0447 ext 229

<http://www.natureconservancy.ca>

Weed Management Workshop: Dealing with grassy weeds

June 25

Humboldt, Sask.

June 26

Davidson, Sask.

June 27

Rosetown, Sask.

To register contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 or Contact your local Regional Crop or Forage Specialist for more information

July 2013

Nature Conservancy of Canada – Edenwold Bio-Inventory

July 13

Edenwold, Sask.

Reed Lake, Important Bird Area Stewardship Blitz

July 20

Morse, Sask.

Contact Joseph Kotlar
306-347-0447 ext 229

<http://www.natureconservancy.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.sk.ca.

Another successful NPSS AGM

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

The 18th NPSS Annual General Meeting and Conference took place in Saskatoon on February 8 and 9, 2013. The theme was **Native Plants - Native People**.

Our event was designed to create awareness of Saskatchewan's native plants and ecosystems, and the long history that First Nations have had with them. It was our aim that our event would give insight into how our natural world is woven into aboriginal culture, both in a historical and contemporary context, and what our society today can learn from this. As always, this was an interesting and fun event with an exciting line up of speakers.

Keynote speakers Joseph Naytowhow and Candace Savage informed and entertained the crowd on Friday night, followed by a wine and cheese reception. Joseph is a member of the Sturgeon Lake First Nation, renowned storyteller, actor and musician. Joseph talked about the interconnectedness of culture and nature, and how we must all find our connection with nature. Candace is an award-winning author of several books, many of which are nature-based. She read passages from her latest book, *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory From a Prairie Landscape*, which won the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for nonfiction.

Saturday was filled with presentations on a wide range of topics. Carol Crowe introduced an aboriginal environmental monitor training program that has seen great success. Carol's presentation was followed by Kjelti Anderson speaking about the establishment of a native plant medicinal garden at the Allen Sapp Gallery in North Battleford, Sask. For the last presentation of the morning, Fidji Gendron and Dawn Marsden from the First Nations University of Canada educated the crowd with a presentation on indigenous food and medicine. Saturday afternoon was no less action-packed, with four more speakers. Anna Leighton gave an interesting presentation of ethnobotany, followed by Corina Rider who outlined the various environmental projects un-



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

The 18th annual Native Plant Society AGM was once again a well attended event.

derway at the Carry the Kettle First Nation near Sintaluta, Sask. After a short break, Kansie Fox discussed the species at risk management occurring on Blood Tribe land in southern Alberta. The last presenter of the day was Conrad Gamble, who outlined the many different projects ongoing at the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation near Duck Lake, Sask. The day ended with a native drumming demonstration, lead by elder John Sugar.



Candace Savage

If there was ever any question as to whether Saskatchewan's First Nations were actively involved in conservation, all doubt was erased with the incredible work that was presented at our event. Although the NPSS has had a long history of involvement with First Nations in Saskatchewan, this was the first event in NPSS history to focus so strongly on the culture-nature connection and, to our knowledge, one of the largest events in Saskatchewan focused on native culture and the environment. The event was well attended, with over 70 participants, and we received very positive feedback from many. Some even mentioned that it was the best annual general meeting they've ever been to. Another positive spin-off of the event was the number of partnerships and collaborations that

were either started or strengthened. Scanning the crowd during the breaks, you could see many individuals and groups talking about ways to work together. Another positive note regarding our event was the strong attendance by youth, particularly the many students from the SIAST Woodland Campus in Prince Albert.

Given our success, don't be surprised if you see more events and activities with a similar theme. If you attended our annual general meeting you know how great it was. If you missed it, there's always next year (in Regina) or the upcoming field trips to get your fill of all things native plant-related. We have also posted the presentations from our annual general meeting on the **Events** page of our website, www.npss.sk.ca.

To see photos from the annual general meeting, visit our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/npss.sk/photos_albums.

Thanks to all of the presenters and participants, and to our generous sponsors: SaskPower – Exclusive Carbon Neutral Sponsor; SaskEnergy and SIGA – Gold Sponsors; and Water Security Agency, PotashCorp, and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner – Coffee Sponsors. ☘

Fire a fixture on prairie land for years

By LUC DELANOY

Saskatoon Nature Society

Editor's Note: First published as Nature Notes - Saskatoon Sun - Sunday April 8, 2012.

Peter Fidler's historical accounts from 1792-1793 in southwestern Alberta stated: "Every fall and spring and even in winter when there is no snow, these large plains either in one place or other is constantly on fire...The lightning in the spring and fall frequently light the grass and in the winter it is done by Indians."

It appears that fire and prairie go hand in hand.

In fact, in the absence of fire and drought, the fescue prairie would actually support tree growth. Scientists estimate that fescue prairie must be burned every five to 10 years to stop invasion by shrubs and trees.

With the settlement of the prairies, the frequency and intensity of prairie fire was greatly reduced. Modern managers of prairie landscapes need to find ways to safely reintroduce fire to maintain their historical state. The spring and fall shoulder seasons are the highest risk times. An ideal time to burn often occurs in very early spring during the snow melt. The open grass patches surrounded by snow provide a stress-free burning window.

Hilly land increases the variation in the snow pattern and safe burning opportunities. Another safe time is after the

grass greens. Although intuition leads one to think that green grass cannot be burned, if there is a healthy dry thatch layer on the ground, it will. Under these conditions, a back fire will slowly consume the thatch layer and the green grass above it, producing a lot of smoke. The consequent reduction in productivity is not necessarily desirable for range management.

Fire during nesting season can also negatively impact ground nesting birds. As a precaution, the manager can drag the area with a light rope to find nesting birds, or, even better, burn later in the season when nesting is finished.

The longer an area is not burned or grazed, the thicker the thatch layer becomes. Homeowners with lawns can appreciate the positive effects of removing thatch buildup from time to time. Burning has a similar stimulating effect for prairie.

With burning experience, the manager is able to better judge how different vegetation patches will burn to create the safest conditions. Prairie grass is the ideal burning material, as it burns in most weather conditions and quite evenly.

Non-native grasses are more temperamental. For instance, smooth brome grass is finicky and will burn hot or not at all, while Kentucky bluegrass will mat

and often smoulders more than it burns.

Shrubs vary according to species. Snowberry burns very readily due to its fine branching structure. Wolf willow is heavier branched, but still burns well because it grows in thin stands intermixed with grass and contains a volatile oil in the leaves. Other shrubs such as Saskatoon, choke-cherry and hawthorn don't burn easily as they are heavily branched and have little or no fine fuel intermixed.

Burning often results in abundant flowering and seed production. Western red lilies are known to flower in a area that has been burned, where they were not noticed before, possibly giving them the name fire lily.

Other plants such as juniper do not like fire and can be completely eliminated with burning. The volatile oil in the needles produces a fragrant white smoke as the patch is

slowly but completely consumed. Care should be taken not to eliminate it where overwintering deer paw through the snow to feed on it. Horsetail is another species that does not tolerate fire, departing this world with a loud pop. *

Delaney works with the Meewasin Valley Authority and writes for the Saskatoon Nature Society.

“Every fall and spring... these large plains either in one place or other is constantly on fire.”

– Peter Fidler, Hudson Bay Company explorer.



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Fire is a natural rejuvenating process on the prairie and has been since long before it was a land management tool.

Book your passport to prairie exploration

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director

Are you planning your summer getaway and want to visit native prairie, but don't know where to find any?

We've got the solution for you! *Saskatchewan's Prairies Places* is a book developed by the NPSS for your needs.

It's a directory of all the publicly-accessible native prairie areas in Saskatchewan, from Regional, Provincial and National Parks to conservation areas and even private land.

It is organized like a provincial park guide and is easy to follow. For each prairie area, there is background information, suggestions on what to see and do, directions to the site and contact information should you have any questions. There is also at least one colour photo for each property, and many have a plant checklist in the appendix at the back, so you know what you can expect to see.

The book is the only one of its kind and is your passport to prairie exploration.

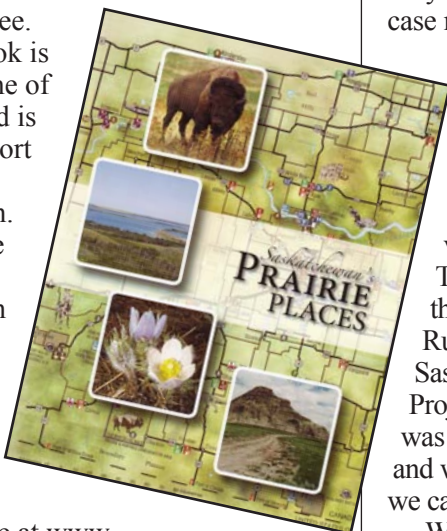
And the best part?

You can get one from the NPSS for only \$10!

Visit our online store at www.npss.sk.ca;

you can even pay with your credit card, or send us a cheque.

Happy travels this summer. 🌱

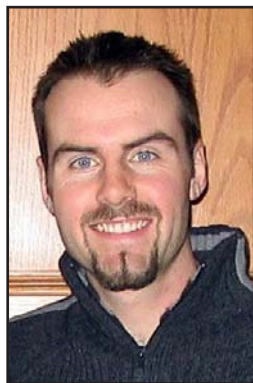


Keeping real busy

Without getting too bitter about the winter (as I'm sure that you've heard enough people complain about it), I've heard many people comment that this was one of the snowiest and longest winter's we've had. Indeed, some areas of the province have broken snowfall records. Even looking back in my records to last year, the winner of our Spot the Crocus contest saw the first crocus on March 31. Clearly this isn't the case for 2013.

Now to turn our thoughts to the warm

days of summer. The NPSS is going to be extremely busy this summer and we invite you to join us! We're hosting our annual summer field tours and have four lined up across the province. We'll have a few other day tours around Saskatoon and Regina throughout the summer months.

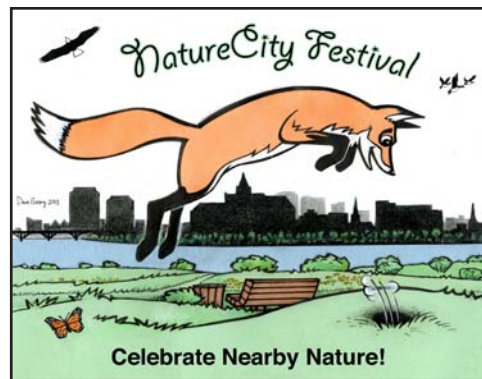


CHET NEUFELD
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
MESSAGE

One of those tours will be part of the first (and possibly annual) NatureCity Festival in Saskatoon, of which the NPSS is a lead organizer. Taking place May 25 to 31, the festival will showcase native plants in the city in conjunction with more than 40 community groups and business. For more on the festival, visit www.wildaboutsaskatoon.org.

We will also be looking for volunteers to help us out on conservation projects across the province. Two that have been mainstays for the past few years are the Flowering Rush Removal Project near Watrous, Sask., and the Salt Cedar Monitoring Project near Findlater, Sask. Last year was very successful for these projects, and we will once again need all the help we can get in order to get our work done.

We also have a number of other new and continuing projects. Our Rare Plants and Ranchers project will enter its second year. This means I'll once again



be travelling across Saskatchewan visiting properties to collect data on species at risk and their habitat, and will later draft customized species at risk management plans for the ranchers. I'll also be revisiting the 2012 participants to make sure that their management plans are still working for them and provide up to \$2,000 to help implement management practices for the species at risk on their land.

This project is being funded by Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, and we have also received match funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment's Fish and Wildlife Development Fund for 2013.

One exciting new project we will be busy with this year is the development an early detection, rapid response strategy for invasive species in Saskatchewan. This is a comprehensive project with many components, including the development of provincially-relevant fact sheets for current and potentially invasive species, hosting weed identification workshops, local invasive species eradication and monitoring efforts and the testing of a weed risk assessment model that will better help us predict and prioritize invasive species for Saskatchewan.

If successful, we hope to create a list of the high priority species and, if they are not already listed, submit them to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture to be included in the Weed Control Act. This project is generously funded by Agriculture Canada's Canadian Agriculture Adaptation Program.

As you can see, we've got a lot on our plate. In fact, it's probably the busiest we've ever been. We've got well over \$100,000 in grants, and we're still waiting to hear about another \$50,000 more. There has never been a better time to become involved with the NPSS. 🌱

Environmental Sciences Instructor Positions Lakeland College

Lakeland College's School of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences requires career-minded and energetic instructors to teach in our Environmental Science programs within a multi-disciplinary, team-oriented atmosphere. The Vermilion Campus is located in a vibrant community with a supportive family atmosphere, great cultural and recreational opportunities, and is within 35 minutes driving distance of the City of Lloydminster.

Instructor, Soils/Land Reclamation - Competition No: 13-2601-006

The ideal candidate would have expertise in the following areas: Introductory Soil Science, Soil Classification, Reclamation of disturbed areas (oil and gas, coal mines, oilsands, pipelines, sand and gravel), and Drilling Waste management. Instructional responsibilities include classroom, lab, and field trip instruction, preparation and marking of assignments and exams. Other responsibilities will include student advising, key participation in the Environmental Conservation and Reclamation major, and participation in departmental meetings and committees, as well as Industry liaison. A M.Sc. or Ph.D. in a closely related discipline and experience in the environmental industry related to the above courses are necessary.

Instructor, Plant/Range Ecology - Competition No: 13-2601-007

The ideal candidate would have expertise in the following areas: Ecology, Restoration Ecology, Forest Ecology, Land-use Planning, and Urban Conservation & Stewardship. Instructional responsibilities include classroom, lab, and field trip instruction, preparation and marking of assignments and exams. Other responsibilities will include student advising, key participation in the Conservation and Restoration Ecology major team, and participation in departmental meetings and committees, as well as Industry liaison. A M.Sc. or Ph.D. in Plant or Range Ecology, or a closely related discipline, and experience in the environmental industry related to the above courses are necessary.

These are Continuing Full-time Faculty appointments at the Vermilion Campus, to commence in early August 2013. This posting will remain open until suitable candidates are found.

A combination of education and experience may be considered. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Those selected for an interview will be contacted.



Please quote the competition number
and send current resume and names of
three references to:

Lakeland College Human Resources
5707 College Drive
Vermilion, Alberta T9X 1K5
Email: hr@lakelandcollege.ca
(MS Word format or .pdf)
Fax: 780 853 8702
www.lakelandcollege.ca

Spot the Crocus contest



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Prairie crocus (*Pulsatilla patens*).

The Spot the Crocus contest is back!

We know you've been keepin' your eyes peeled for the first prairie crocus (*Pulsatilla patens*) of the season (maybe you've already spotted it!).

Let us know when you see the first one of the year – you can even include a picture of it.

As usual, the winner will receive bragging rights for the year and a mention in our newsletter. All submissions will also be sent along to PlantWatch, a program which helps to monitor climate change. 🌱

Blazing Star Wildflower Seed Company

Your Saskatchewan source for native wildflower seeds, native plants, wedding favours, and more. Order online or visit us at the River Landing Market (adjacent to the Saskatoon Farmer's Market) Saturdays 8am to 2 pm, May to October.

Box 382, Aberdeen, SK S0K 0A0 (306) 253-4219
GrowWildflowers.ca

Corporate Members and Partners



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Agriculture



SaskPower
Powering the future



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Highways and
Infrastructure



National
Defence

Défense
nationale

Indigenous Visions Inc.



Meewasin
Saskatchewan
Prairie Conservation
Action Plan



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Environment



sherritt



CanNorth

AGRICULTURE COUNCIL
OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN



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