



Native Plant News

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@NPSS_SK Summer 2015

Rare Plants and Ranchers Going Strong

2015 marks the fourth year of the incredibly successful Rare Plants and Ranchers program, a project of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) that works with ranchers who have nationally rare plant species on their land. To date, most participants

Rare Plants and Ranchers is free to join, and participants do little to no work themselves. The program works by establishing relationships with ranchers who have rare plants on their land and helping them to manage these. Participating ranchers are first



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

One of the beautiful properties being managed for plant species at risk through the Rare Plants and Ranchers Program.

have been stewards from Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue program, but this year has seen the addition of ranchers not yet participating in any program. This is necessary for future program growth as the NPSS has covered almost all of Nature Saskatchewan's stewardship base.

visited so that a short interview about their land and ranching operation can be conducted. Once this is complete, the ranch is surveyed for known and new rare plant populations, as well as any threats to these, and data is collected regarding these. The data is then synthesized into a site specific beneficial

management plan containing recommendations for the rancher to implement. Ongoing logistical and financial support in the form of match funding help the rancher implement the recommendations and manage the rare plant populations. Periodically, the ranches are re-surveyed in order

to determine the effectiveness of the beneficial management practices on the rare plant populations.

As of the beginning of 2015, the NPSS had 52,278 acres of rare plant habitat and native prairie covered by site specific beneficial management plans, and had delivered \$20,000 in match funding to support the implementation of beneficial practices for rare plant species. Currently the program has management plans in place at various locations across the province for federally rare plants such as Small-flowered Sand Verbena (*Tripterocalyx micranthus*), Slender Mouse-ear-cress (*Transberingia bursifolia* subsp. *virgata*), Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), Hairy Prairie Clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*), and Smooth Goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*), but searches have also been conducted for Tiny Cryptanthus (*Cryptantha minima*), Dwarf Woollyheads (*Psilocarphus brevissimus* var. *brevissimus*), and Western Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*). Numerous provincially rare plant species have also been found and are included in the management plans. Field work is expected to continue into September.

UPDATE - Summer 2015

The NPSS has added 3 new ranches to its roster of participants, bringing an additional 29,280 acres into the program and raising the total to 81,558 acres. Field work is currently underway and new discoveries of provincially and federally rare plant populations have

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Executive Director's Report

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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
Spring Issue:	December 15
Summer Issue:	February 1
Fall Issue:	March 15
	June 15
	September 15

Membership Dues (Year End November 30)

Individual \$30	Non-profit organization \$100
Family \$45	Corporate \$200
Student \$15	Life \$500

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

I hope that everyone is having a great summer so far. For anyone working outside, the weather has been great - dry and not too hot until recently, which has resulted in very few mosquitoes. Here at the NPSS, we're as busy as ever. We have 2 major projects currently underway; Our Rare Plants and Ranchers project, now in its fourth year, and our Master Naturalist project which has just begun. More about these 2 projects in the pages of this newsletter.

We also have several smaller yet equally important initiatives, such as our ongoing eradication and monitoring of invasive Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and Salt Cedar (*Tamarix* spp.), our continuing Native Plants in the Classroom project which helps schools plant prairie learning gardens by providing expertise, seeds and plants, and other short-term activities that arise throughout the year. I also sit on a number of provincial, national and international committees.

Also for 2015, the NPSS is celebrating its 20th anniversary. This is a major milestone in our society's history and we've come a long way since our humble beginnings in 1995. Here's a snapshot of then and now:

Membership

- 1995 – 15 and only in Saskatchewan
- 2015 – 218 in SK, AB, BC, MB and the U.S.

Funding

- To date the NPSS has raised over 2 MILLION DOLLARS for native plant education and conservation.
- \$500,000 – the value of the largest single NPSS project. Most of the money was distributed to individuals and organizations fighting invasive species.

Field Tours

- 70 – the number of field tours the NPSS has hosted since 1995.

Committees

- 12 – the number of committees the NPSS is currently involved with.

Partners

- 27 – the number of partners the NPSS currently has.

Projects

- To date, the NPSS has completed 77 major projects.

Education

- 170, 582 – the number of students in Saskatchewan that have been sent NPSS educational resources.

Habitat

- 5,000 – the number of native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses that the NPSS has planted.

Advertising In Native Plant News

Rates: \$50 for 1 issue, \$175 for 4 issues

Contact the NPSS for more details.

Ph: (306) 668-3940 E-mail: info@npss.sk.ca

- 2,000 - the number of seed packets the NPSS has given out, each which covers a square meter

Stewardship

- 52,278 – approximate number of acres of native habitat currently being managed for rare plants through beneficial management plans developed by the Rare Plants and Ranchers program.

Involvement

- 20,000 – estimated number of volunteer hours involved in NPSS projects since 1995.

With this momentum and your support, I know that the NPSS will be able to continue our good work and will be an effective conservation organization for decades to come. Have a great summer!

Chet Neufeld

Chet Neufeld
NPSS Executive Director. ✱

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PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Surveying for Smooth Goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*).

been found, as well as threats to some. So far, the biggest threat encountered in the 2015 field season has been extensive populations of Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*). This invasive weed is not

only a threat to rare plant populations, but to ranches in general.

The NPSS has secured funding to continue the Rare Plants and Ranchers program for an additional three years. Environment Canada, through the Habitat Stewardship Program, has committed \$169,740 (\$56,580 per year from 2015-2018), and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment has contributed \$41,100 for 2015 through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. "Both of these organizations have funded the program since its inception in 2012, so to have consistent and continued funding from them not only strengthens our program but also demonstrates our success and their faith in us" said NPSS Executive Director Chet Neufeld.

The NPSS is always looking for new participants for the Rare Plants and

Ranchers program, so if you have any federally rare plants (also known as plant species at risk), please contact us. If you're not sure if you have any

Upcoming Events

2015

Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference: "It's a Happening Place!"

February 16-18, 2016

Saskatoon, SK

For more info or to register, please go to:

<http://www.pcsc.ca/>

Canadian Forage and Grassland Annual General Meeting

November 17-19, 2015

Saskatoon, SK

<http://www.canadianfga.com/>

Society for Ecological Restoration - Western Canada Chapter Rebuilding Resilience:

Restoration in the 21st Century

May 12-15, 2016

Victoria, BC

<http://chapter.ser.org/westerncanada/>

Nature Conservancy of Canada's Conservation Volunteer Opportunities

August 22, 2015 (Edenwold, SK)

September 11, 2015 (Asquith, SK)

September 18, 2015 (Regina, SK)

Contact [saskatchewan@](mailto:saskatchewan@conservationvolunteers.ca)

conservationvolunteers.ca for more info

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.



federally rare plants but have native habitat, contact us to see if you would be a good fit for our program.

Part of the National Conservation Plan, this project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Dans le cadre du Plan de conservation national, ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada. ✱

Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program Puts Citizen Scientists to Work

Conservation efforts in Saskatchewan are undertaken by many organizations. Although the projects are usually designed and directed by people trained in the natural sciences, much of the ground work relies on volunteers. Volunteers are difficult to find, and often lack the knowledge, skill, and background in one or more aspects of natural science required to undertake the task. This impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects because volunteers have to be trained which is time-consuming, or skilled professionals have to be hired which is costly. Ultimately, this shortage of skilled volunteers often leads to extended timelines, exceeded budgets, project goals not being accomplished, or an overall lower level of project success.

In an effort to address these issues, the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan has recently initiated the Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program with a 3 year grant from Environment Canada worth \$54,000. The purpose of the Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program is to develop a network of reliable, highly skilled “citizen scientists” who would volunteer to assist with the more complex tasks identified by each of the partner organizations for their conservation projects. Like a Master Gardener Program, interested participants would learn about different facets of the natural sciences through a series of lessons in a set curriculum. Each lesson will

be designed with provincially-relevant content and delivered in a classroom and/or outdoor setting, with a one-day field workshop to Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area.

Once all lessons are completed in the curriculum, the participant would become certified as a Saskatchewan Master Naturalist, and would be required to complete a minimum number of volunteer

“professional development” hours with one of the participating conservation groups to maintain their status. These Saskatchewan Master Naturalists will be highly sought after by a number of conservation groups in the province, contributing to the success of many conservation projects during and after their involvement in the program. The Master Naturalists will benefit not only by gaining knowledge and appreciation for nature, but also being given the opportunity to participate in projects they wouldn’t have been able to without the training program. Saskatchewan’s ecosystems and natural spaces will benefit from the many highly

skilled volunteers working to ensure the success of conservation projects across the province.

The concept of a Master Naturalist Program is not a new one; various states have been successfully running programs for a number of years, and the City of Edmonton has recently



PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Participants will become Master Naturalists through completing a series of learning modules.

begun an excellent program. Ours is an adaptation of these programs, borrowing portions from a range of existing Master Naturalist Programs, with added guidance and information from provincial stakeholder groups. To date, five conservation agencies are active stakeholders: the City of Saskatoon, Ducks Unlimited, Saskatoon Nature Society/Nature Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Wildlife Federation and Meewasin Valley Authority. These groups have not only provided input throughout the planning process, but will also help develop and deliver the content in the anticipation of having Master Naturalists help with their conservation projects. If you represent a potential stakeholder group and want to participate in the Master Naturalist Program planning or delivery, please contact the NPSS.

If you would like more information or to take part in the Master Naturalist Program once the course content has been completed, please contact Chet Neufeld at info@npss.sk.ca or (306) 668-3940. We anticipate that courses related to the program will begin in spring of 2016.

The NPSS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Environment Canada’s Grants and Contributions Fund. *



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Field exercises will complement the classroom learning.

Bring the Prairie to Your Yard

By SARAH VINGE-MAZER

Provincial Botanist - Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre

Love native prairie? Why not grow a piece of it in your yard to enjoy? Using native plants in your own yard is a great way to enjoy many benefits that our province's diversity has to offer. Native plant species are inherently suited to our growing conditions with traits gained through years of evolution on the prairies and parkland. Some of the benefits of growing them include:

- Reduced maintenance. Once established, your native plants should never need watering or soil amendments/fertilizing. Weeding will still be a must, as with any landscaping project.
- Hardiness. Spring frost? Drought? No problem! Many native species can handle all sorts of prairie weather conditions with no assistance.
- Providing habitat. Your native plants can provide both food and shelter for other prairie critters such as bees and butterflies.
- Diversity throughout the season. Can you buy diversity using non-native plants? Sure you can. But you'll likely need to put more work into maintaining it. Certain native perennials can bloom as early as March or April (spring weather permitting) and if you structure your species composition correctly, you'll have an ever-changing garden of blooms throughout the summer into the fall (some species bloom into October). Native plants know how to proliferate so will spread on their own or self-seed, meaning they'll be there again for you next year. Never buy annuals from a greenhouse again! And nothing beats a crocus popping out of the receding snow in the spring.
- Education. Our native prairie has endured a lot of at the hands of human-built pressures over the last century, and those pressures still continue today. Help keep the diversity of the prairie alive and use your garden to teach others about the importance of prairie conservation!

Native plants can provide so much liveliness to your yard, but there are a few things to note before you dive into your



PHOTO BY SARAH VINGE-MAZER

Native plants grow extensive root systems, often even before much of the plant is seen above-ground.

next project:

- If you are starting from seed, it may take some time (sometimes 3-4 weeks) before seeds germinate, and some perennials may not flower in the first year. Native species are usually busy at

growing good root systems below ground before much is seen above. Be sure to add some annuals to your garden to get some blooms in your first year.

- Native plants are good at propagating themselves, whether via seed, rhizomes, or stolons. Get to know the species you want to plant and if you prefer a neat arrangement in your beds, be prepared to remove seed



PHOTO BY SARAH VINGE-MAZER

3rd year native plant garden, going for the wild look.

heads and know which species you may want to keep contained in pots. Milkweed, noted for its benefits for the monarch butterfly, is one such spreader. In a few years it can take over any space it's given and is hard to contain, therefore best suited for large pot to curb its spread.

- If you are planting in pots, you will need deep ones. Native plants grow extensive root systems.
- Some native plants may look like weeds to you when they begin to sprout. Keep seeded patches marked so you'll know which are weeds to pull and which are the plants to keep!
- As with any yard project, plan ahead of time. You'll want to have an idea of sun/shade, moisture, soil type, etc. at your site before you select your species. You may also want to keep in mind the species bloom time, color, and height. Some species, when grown in a garden setting, free from the intense competition of the native prairie, may grow much larger than usual.
- Beware of "wildflower" seed mixes found in conventional hardware and garden centres. These are often generic mixes and don't necessarily contain species native to our region. They may even contain some aggressive or invasive non-native species.
- Your best sources of native plant stock will be the ones that are closest to where you live.

For resources on where to find native species in Saskatchewan, check out the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan's website. Some of my favorites are Blazing Star Wildflower Seed Company and Prairie Originals.

Happy gardening! 🌱

Grovenlock Pasture to Become a National Wildlife Area

The federal government recently announced the Grovenlock Community Pasture will be transferred from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to Environment Canada.

The Community Pasture Program was a land-management service created by AAFC in the 1930s to conserve land that eroded during droughts. AAFC is transferring the control and administration of these pastures to Environment Canada, which will work to conserve this grassland ecosystem and habitat for species at risk.

The local community and ranchers who use Grovenlock Pasture for grazing are important partners in the conservation of this area. Environment Canada will work with them to develop a strategy to manage the pasture in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible way to support livestock production, wildlife habitat protection and local community interests. Environment Canada has consulted with local landowners, ranchers and conservation groups, such as Sustainable Canada, over the past year, and will announce the official transfer at a later date.

Quick Facts

- Grovenlock Community Pasture, more than 200 km² in size, is located in south-western Saskatchewan, and will remain federally owned.
- Environment Canada will continue consultations with residents, ranchers, the Rural Municipality of Reno #51, First Nations, the Province of Saskatchewan and other conservation groups before finalizing a management strategy for the area.
- Grovenlock Community Pasture is primarily natural prairie grassland and supports more than 11 species at risk.
- Livestock grazing, which mimics traditional disturbance by plains bison maintains the health and quality of these native prairie grasslands.
- The biologically diverse native prairie grassland in the area is widely recognized nationally and internationally by Bird Studies Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and other conservation organizations for its significant concentration of migratory birds. *



PHOTO BY BRANIMIR GJETVAJ

Grovenlock PFRA pasture.

Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre - Botanist

The Ministry of Environment, through the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre (SKCDC), in partnership with the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, require the services of a **Botanist** for a one year term position beginning September 28, 2015. The SKCDC is committed to serving the Saskatchewan public by gathering, interpreting and distributing standardized information on the ecological status of provincial wild species and communities. This mission is supported by both partners.

Candidates should have direct experience in botany, ecology, biology, natural resource management, biogeography or other related environmental areas. As well, a working knowledge of the Species At Risk Act and Species At Risk taxa is highly desired. The successful candidate will lead in the collection and entry of biodiversity information into Biotics through the compilation of information from a variety of sources (e.g., government reports, journal articles, databases, published and non-published documents, internet searches, photographs, and field work). The ability to assess and evaluate the quality of raw data, within set guidelines, and interpret data entry standards is imperative.

The following personal skills and experience are required; strong map reading ability, botanical knowledge, advanced computer skills in Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Microsoft Access/Excel/Word, good report writing skills, proven team spirit/communication skills, and good general science and math. Demonstrable skills in GIS and SQL are desirable. Some travel is required.

We are looking for candidates who have a genuine interest in nature and the environment and who will carry out the work in a conscientious, efficient, and professional manner. The ability to communicate well with co-workers is essential.

Interested persons should send their resume and a covering letter, or direct questions to Jeff Keith or Sarah Vinge-Mazer, by August 28, 2015. *

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90,000 Acres of Conservation Land Made Available to Cattle Producers for Grazing

Environment Minister Herb Cox and Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart announced that approximately 90,000 acres of Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF) land will be made available to cattle producers facing dry conditions.

“We recognize the challenges that dry conditions have created for some cattle producers and are pleased to make this land available for grazing,” Cox said. “It will offer significant acres for cattle producers, and revenue generated as a result of this initiative will help fund future conservation initiatives.”

“We appreciate the Ministry of Environment making these lands available,” Stewart said. “The extremely dry conditions of this spring and summer have left many cattle producers searching for additional pasture. This grassland will help producers who are facing a shortage of feed for their cattle.”

The Fish and Wildlife Development Fund land, located throughout the province, are for the most part native prairie or other grasslands and are typically used for conservation purposes. The land, which was purchased through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, was also made available to producers in 2009. While some of the available land has water sources and is fenced, much of the land will require temporary fencing or water. Producers who are awarded access to FWDF lands are responsible for the cost and construction of any necessary improvements.

The same grazing lease fees that apply to agricultural Crown land will apply to the FWDF land. The land will be made available on a first come, first served basis. A list of available lands by rural municipality will be available on the Ministry of Environment’s website and at local offices. Producers who are interested in securing the land

should contact their local Ministry of Environment office as to availability, stocking rates and any unique conditions that may apply.

For more information, producers can contact their local Ministry of Environment office, visit www.environment.gov.sk.ca or call 1-800-567-4224.

For more information, contact:

Michele McEachern
Environment
Regina
Phone: 306-787-0412
Email: michele.mceachern@gov.sk.ca

Sarah Hein
Agriculture
Regina
Phone: 306-787-5389
Email: sarah.hein@gov.sk.ca
Cell: 306-527-9102 *

Plan to Attend the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference

The Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference, also known as PCESC 2016, will be held in Saskatoon, SK on February 16-18, 2016. This conference is held every three years and rotates among the Prairie Provinces, bringing together ranchers, scientists, naturalists, land managers and other prairie and species at risk stakeholders.

The theme for PCESC 2016 is “*Prairie: It’s a Happening Place!*” and is a nod to the many diverse functions, processes and attributes that make up the prairie ecosystem and the species that live there. The agenda will explore social, economic and environmental factors that impact prairie and species at risk conservation. The program will focus on four sub-categories including:

1. Status, trends, threats and issues surrounding prairie and endangered species conservation.
2. Protection and conservation of prairie and species
3. Restoration and recovery of prairie and species
4. Connecting and motivating people to wonder, care, and act.

There will also be a trade show, banquet and awards ceremony to round out the event.

Participants interested in submitting a poster or presentation abstract that fits into one of the four sub-themes can submit abstracts to pcap@sasktel.net by September 4, 2015. If any groups are interested in sponsorship opportunities, they may also indicate their interest by contacting the PCAP office by email. You can also find updates by visiting the website at www.pcesc.ca as well as on social media including Twitter @PCESC16 and on Facebook at facebook.com/PCESC16

Watch for registrations to open in September for “*Prairie: It’s a Happening Place!*” *

Calling All Volunteers!

Luther College High School is embarking on a sustainable landscape project that involves the creation of a pollinator island made up of native flowers and we are looking for partners to educate and guide the process.

If anyone is interested in providing expertise please contact:

Dave Hall, MEd
Luther College High School
1500 Royal St.
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada
S4T-5A5
306-791-9150

Be A Weed Warrior!

Do you want to meet people, have fun, get some fresh air and help the environment? Why not join us to help pull invasive flowering rush from a wetland. We will provide the tools - all you have to do is be willing to get your hands dirty. Also, please bring rubber boots or waders if you have them, sunscreen, a hat, plenty of water and a lunch.

The wetland is between Young and Watrous, SK and is the only wetland in Saskatchewan with flowering rush, so if we can eradicate it from here we will save the province from a potential disaster.



Flowering rush removal dates: throughout August and September - please contact us for specific dates, times and driving directions.

Please let us know if you would like to help out by contacting us at (306) 668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca

We need to be able to contact you in case of cancellations or changes to our schedule. *

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