



Saskatoon Nature Society Newsletter

November 2013

Vol. 35 No. 9

November Meeting

Community Pastures: Why Do Grass and Birds Need Cowboys?

Joe Schmutz

7:30 PM Thursday, November 21
Room 106, Biology Bldg., U. of S. campus

In 1935, the federal government passed the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) Act. The PFRA's Community Pasture Program cared for 23 pastures (0.7 million acres) in Manitoba and 62 (1.77 million acres) in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's pastures alone are 1.25 times the size of Prince Edward Island. Though the program was working well, we stand to lose much of the program's public benefits through the fine print in omnibus Bill-C38 passed last year.

Historian David C. Jones called the hasty settlement of the then largely misunderstood prairie ecosystem, "Canada's greatest human disaster". Jones also said that the visionaries who created PFRA were the new agricultural experts with "... their feet more on the ground, their hearts more in the communities they served, their minds more appreciative of the power of nature, than the circle of pundits who had announced to the world the readiness of the land for the plow."

In our era of biodiversity in crisis and a 'new climate normal' just around the corner, is being grounded in communities and respectful of nature truly obsolete? How can we wrest a once world-class program from the fire? Come and bring your words of advice!



Field Trips

All are welcome to participate in field trips; bring your friends. Carpooling for out-of-town trips is usually arranged at the meeting place. Participants are expected to share gasoline costs and should make arrangements with the driver to do so. Unless indicated, there is no other charge. Phone the trip leader if you have any questions. Participants are free to depart early if they wish. Members with CB radios or FRS radios should bring them on out-of-town trips. Check our website at www.saskatoonnaturesociety.sk.ca for last minute changes or cancellations.

Saturday, November 16 Pike Lake Birding

We will look for winter visitors to the park. Wear warm clothing. The chickadees will graciously accept donations of sunflower seeds.

9:00 AM–12:00 PM

Meet at the Western Development Museum parking lot. *NEW LOCATION*

Leader: Hilda Noton (306-374-0674)

Sunday, November 24 Pre-Grey Cup Birding at President Murray Park

We will look for kinglets, creepers and crossbills in the conifers.

2:00 PM–3:00 PM

Meet at the corner of Wiggins Ave. and Colony St.
Leader: Jan and Stan Shadick (306-652-5975).

Saturday, December 7 Gardiner Dam Birding

We will look for ducks, geese, gulls and eagles. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.

9:00 AM–5:00 PM

Meet at the Western Development Museum parking lot, 2610 Lorne Ave.

Leader: Frank Roy (306-374-8571)

President's Corner

It's all about walking the talk. At its last meeting, the Board of Saskatoon Nature Society resolved to use FSC paper in our printing wherever feasible, and we have searched out an FSC-certified printer to handle the jobs.

What does this mean? FSC stands for Forest Stewardship Council. It is an international certification and labeling system dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. Forest operations are evaluated to meet FSC's strict environmental and social standards. Fibre from certified forests is then tracked all the way to the consumer through the FSC Chain of Custody system. FSC-certified wood, paper and other forest products are sold with the FSC label by certified companies in the marketplace. For us, this means that our printer will be an FSC-certified enterprise, using FSC paper products, coming ultimately from FSC-certified forests. For more information about FSC Canada, go to www.ca.fsc.org.

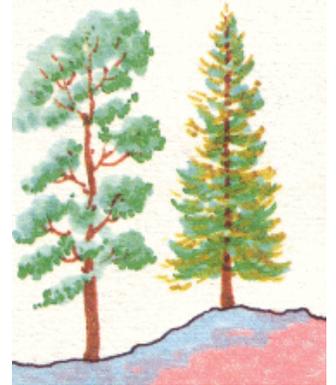
As an example of what this means in the harvesting of forest products, if you attended the Nature Saskatchewan Fall Meet in Meadow Lake you toured the forestry operations of Mistik Management, the only FSC-certified forestry company in Saskatchewan and one of only seven certified operations in Western Canada. Mistik supplies wood to NorSask Forest Products and Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp Inc. To achieve and maintain its certification, Mistik adheres to certain practice standards: maintains sustainable forest management standards; complies with environmental legislation, regulations and policies to prevent environmental pollution; respects Aboriginal and treaty rights; provides participation opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in the forestry activities; and continually monitors and improves its environmental and sustainable forest management performance through setting objectives and targets and carrying out regular evaluations. Mistik ensures that wood harvested illegally, or from forests where high conservation values are threatened by management activities, does not enter the certified or controlled wood supply chain. For more information about Mistik, check out www.mistik.ca/fsc.htm.

Closer to home, we have begun to work with an FSC-certified printer in Saskatoon to handle production

of our newsletter and other publications. You will start to see the FSC logo on our documents. Our research revealed that we could actually save some money with this move while also adhering to our new policy on using FSC paper.

The next step for me personally will be to purchase only FSC paper for my home printer. I want to walk the talk, too. How about you?

Joan Feather
President



Young Naturalists

The Young Naturalists is all about nature activities for kids and their families. Each program offers interesting activities geared for children aged 5 to 11 years. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Enrolment is limited on most programs, so register early. To register or for more information, call 306-975-3042 or e-mail saskatoonnaturekids@gmail.com. Visit the Young Naturalists' website for more information.

www.saskatoonzoosociety.ca/programs/young-naturalists/

Young Naturalists' Bird feeder Workshop Saturday, November 16, 1:00 PM–2:30 PM

Learn about winter bird watching with a bird feeder. Bring a hammer and build your own bird feeder to take home. Enrolment is limited. Call 306-975-3042 to register or for more information.

Meet at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo Affinity Learning Centre.

Cost: \$10.00 / child. Members : \$5.00 / child (registration required).

Nut Allergy Alert: the materials used in this program have been in contact with peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, and other seeds and tree nuts. This program is not suitable for persons with severe contact (not ingestion) nut allergies.

Announcements and Reports

Congratulations!

Bob Rogers is the recipient of the 2013 Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Greenwing Conservation Award for his work in conserving the province's wetlands. Bob is an active member of Ducks Unlimited, habitat chairman for the Saskatoon Wildlife Federation, and a long-standing member of Saskatoon Nature Society. Congratulations, Bob!

Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas bird counts have been a holiday tradition for over 100 years. Set aside some time this holiday season to count our wintering birds. We welcome everyone to take part. These counts are especially good for beginners since the hours are shorter and bird diversity less than in the spring. There are three local counts:

Saturday, December 14: Clark's Crossing

Thursday, December 26: Saskatoon

Saturday, January 4: Pike Lake

No Fees! Audubon and BSC are no longer charging a \$5 fee. Other regional counts are planned. Look for a detailed announcement in the December *Newsletter* or call Michael Williams (242-5383).

Board Vacancy

We have regretfully accepted Dale Jefferson's resignation from the Board of Directors. The demands of his graduate studies and field work have made it impossible for him to continue on the Board. A special thanks, Dale, for the development and management of our Facebook page, and for agreeing to continue in that role. The board vacancy will be filled at our next AGM in March 2014.

Book Launch—Change of Date

Two books of interest to naturalists will be launched at McNally Robinson Booksellers at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 7, both about the legendary prairie artist, author and conservationist, R. D. Symons. Trevor Herriot will read from *Robert David Symons, Countryman: Artist, Writer, Naturalist, Rancher*, and Stuart Houston will read from *A Country Boy: From Sussex to the Canadian West*. Please note the change of date.

2014 NatureCity Festival Dates Announced

The second annual NatureCity Festival will run Sunday, May 25 through Saturday, May 31, 2014. "We are excited by the great support we had last year and we're confident that 2014 will be even more successful," said Candace Savage, one of Wild About Saskatoon's founding organizers. She added, "Winning the 2013 Conservation Award from Nature Saskatchewan is an affirmation of what we're trying to do here in our beautiful city." Saskatoon Nature Society is one of the core supporters of this week-long extravaganza of field trips, talks, art shows, music and celebrations designed to bring Saskatonians face to face with the flora and fauna of Saskatoon's urban environment. Put those dates on your calendar now!

Wetland Policy

City Council will hear submissions on the proposed amendment to the Official Community Plan, specifically the draft Wetland Policy, on Monday, November 4, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, City Hall. In partnership with others in the Swale Watchers, we will be making a presentation on our views about the Draft Policy's potential to ensure conservation of important wetlands and their biodiversity. We would be happy to see members' smiling faces in Council Chambers that day.

Saskatoon Area Bird Checklist Delayed

The printing of the revised SNS bird checklist for the Saskatoon area has encountered some delays. Watch for an announcement in a future newsletter concerning its availability. At a future monthly meeting we plan to distribute a copy to each member at no charge; after that, copies will be sold for a nominal amount. The new checklist will also be available on our website.

Electronic Newsletter

Members who would prefer to receive the SNS *Newsletter* via email as a pdf document (in colour!) should contact Claire Bullaro at c.bear@sasktel.net. Please send your email from the account to which the *Newsletter* should be sent.

Golden Eagles

The Golden Eagles, a sub-group of the Saskatoon Nature Society, invites retirees and partners interested in birds and the natural world to join our weekly field trips, every Thursday from the first week in April until the end of October. We explore areas near Saskatoon, and on occasion much farther into the province.

Participants should be members of the Saskatoon Nature Society and consider becoming members of Nature Saskatchewan. During warm weather we meet on Thursdays at Churchill Shopping Center, at the corner of Taylor Street and Clarence Avenue. Start times vary between 7:00 and 9:00 AM. We generally bring our lunch, drinks, and a folding chair.

Spring and summer programs feature various destinations near Saskatoon. Spring trips highlight warblers in bright plumage and marshes with ducks and geese. Previous summer trips have included, along with bird sightings, a visit to an orchard, a honey producing operation, and Nature Conservancy lands. Late summer and fall trips highlight northern migrants (thrushes, native sparrows, warblers), shorebirds, geese and cranes. After driving 1,000 km looking for shorebirds for his fall trip, Frank Roy led us to the Perdue area where we identified 18 species in two hours!

Doug and Irene Schmeiser's early October trip took us to visit the Bentley private hockey museum in Delisle, the Leonard Farm museum near Tessier, the abandoned town of Bents, and Prairie Farm Alpacas near Arlee. That was a full day!

A week later, Michael Williams' trip located thousands of Snow Geese near Buffer Lake and 14 Whooping Cranes at the south end of Muskiki Lake near Dana.

With cold weather, snow and icy roads, winter programs are limited to one a month and within the city.

We invite you to join us.

Golden Eagles Late Fall Program

Oct. 24, 9:30 AM Meet and walk at Gabriel Dumont Park. Lunch at 11:30 at the German Cultural Center, 160 Cartwright Street. Leader: Keith Pahl 306-374-3117. Please call Keith to confirm lunch.

Oct 30 (Wednesday), 5:30 PM Turkey dinner at Smitty's, Market Mall. Cost \$17:00 (approx.) includes dessert, beverage, tax and tip. To confirm, please call Orca Thokle 306-244-6746 or Audrey MacKenzie 306-373-2872.

Winter Program

Please note that we will meet directly at all the sites. Dates are the first Thursday of each month, except January when we will meet on January 9.

November 7, 10:00 AM St. Georges's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, 214 Ave. M South. We will tour the cathedral and museum. Lunch 12 noon, Blue Diamond Restaurant, 1428-22nd St. W. Cost: \$8-\$11. Please confirm with Mercedes Wayman (306-373-7002) by December 1.

December 5, 10:00 AM A PowerPoint presentation by Ron Jensen featuring Costa Rica. Saskatoon Forestry Farm & Zoo Affinity Learning Center, located west of the zoo entrance. Lunch 12 noon, Doc Hollandaise, 6-705 Central Ave., Sutherland. Cost: \$8-\$13. Please confirm with Keith Pahl, 306-374-3117, by December 1.

2014 program TBA



Membership Renewals

The year-end rush is upon us, but that is no reason to delay renewing your membership in the Saskatoon Nature Society. You can send in the form on the back page of this *Newsletter* or renew at the membership desk at the monthly meeting. Multi-year memberships are now available. For multi-year members, the two digit number in the upper right corner of your mailing label gives the year your membership expires.

Monarchs in Saskatchewan—Why so Few this Year?

There has been concern expressed lately about the scarcity of Monarchs in the province this year. Low numbers are the norm in SK; large influxes are unusual and occur at about 10 year intervals. 1997 had such an influx as described in a Blue Jay article (March 1998). Large numbers enter the province when there is build up of Monarchs in areas where the migrants originate, and along the migration route (Texas and north throughout the Great Plains).

Do we need to provide food for Monarchs? The adults feed on the nectar of many kinds of plants (lilacs are a favourite) but the caterpillars feed primarily on milkweed. Five different kinds of wild milkweed grow throughout the province (these were described in the Blue Jay, March 1998). Milkweed is also planted in gardens. Depending on the timing of the influx, there is usually plenty of milkweed to feed the caterpillars. However, in 2012, adults started arriving early in Saskatoon (first seen in late May) before many milkweed plants were fully leafed out and the caterpillars ate themselves out of house and home before reaching their final instars. In this case, more milkweed might have been helpful, but perhaps not the complete solution; when there are massive numbers of caterpillars around, other forces often come into play to reduce numbers. In 2007, the timing was different and not only did the first batch of caterpillars do very well, but they became butterflies and produced a second batch of caterpillars and adults. Monarchs were still emerging as late as October that year and several of these were wing-tagged before they left on their migratory flight to Mexico.

When Monarchs leave here, they fly directly to wintering areas in Mexico. How many of them make it? It seems likely that adults that emerge when there is still an ample supply of nectar-bearing flowers along their route might make it. Those that emerge late in the season or in an exceptionally dry year, might not.

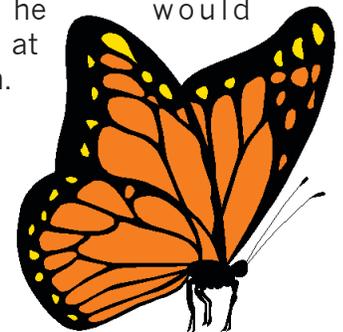
Monarch adults and caterpillars are relatively easy to identify, and we can learn more about local numbers if people report sightings, especially the first and last sightings of adults, and locations where caterpillars are feeding and on what species of plant. Planting milkweed in your garden will facilitate keeping track of numbers since Monarchs

will find the plants whether they are in the city or elsewhere. The milkweed species recommended for gardens by Craig Salisbury is Swamp Milkweed, (*Asclepias incarnata*) because it is less invasive than other species, which are likely to take over your garden.

Because wild milkweed grows in a variety of habitats in south and central SK, plants provided in gardens are unlikely to become the lifeline for Monarchs in the province. Members of Saskatoon Nature Society monitor a breeding population on the native Dwarf Milkweed in Nisbet Forest during the international butterfly count conducted there annually. In general, when there were large numbers in Saskatoon, there were also large numbers there. This suggests that Saskatoon is one of many destinations for Monarchs, but one that does give city dwellers an idea of what is going on in the rest of the province.

If you would like to report local sightings, you can contact me at 306-665-6074 or leighton@sasktel.net. Donald Davis monitors Monarchs nationwide and he would also like to hear from you at Donald_davis@yahoo.com.

Anna Leighton



SNS Members' Discount

With a new membership or a renewal, you receive the SNS membership card. By showing the card, SNS members can receive a discount at the following local merchants.

Wild Birds Unlimited (330A-2600 8th Street E.) offers members a 10 percent discount on regularly priced bird seed, feeders and bird houses, and bird books.

Don's Photo Shop (1902 8th St. E.) offers a discount on photo-finishing and certain other items in the store.

Members can also get a 10% discount at Early's Farm and Garden Centre on all regularly priced wild bird feeding products, bird houses, books, etc.

Saskatoon Nature Society

Mailing address:

Box 448, RPO University
Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8

Website:

www.SaskatoonNatureSociety.sk.ca

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SaskatoonNatureSociety

Chairs and Coordinators

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Coffee	Hilda Voth	306-242-0198
Display	Greg Fenty.....	306-343-6943
Field Trips.....	Stan Shadick.....	306-652-5975
Membership.....	Michael Williams	306-242-5383
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e-distribution....	Claire Bullaro	306-373-1787
Program	Peter Flood.....	306-652-0486
Publications.....	Joan Feather.....	306-653-3160
Webmaster.....	Branimir Gjetvaj	306-382-2642
Young Naturalists.	Greg Fenty.....	306-343-6943

Newsletter

The deadline for the December Newsletter is November 23. Please send any announcements or articles to Robert Johanson (306-653-2610). The editor would appreciate if articles are prepared in their final form and submitted electronically.

email: robert.johanson@usask.ca

2013–2014 Program

Sept. 19	<i>Birding in China: Sichuan and the Tibetan Plateau</i> Ron Jensen
Oct. 17	<i>Winter Snowfall and Wood Frog Tadpole Populations in the Aspen Parkland</i> David Donald
Nov. 21	<i>Community Pastures: Why Do Grass and Birds Need Cowboys?</i> Joe Schmutz
Dec. 12	<i>The Rise and Fall of Prairie Wetlands</i> Kevin Shook
Jan. 16	<i>Wildlife and Agriculture</i> Nettie Wiebe
Feb. 20	<i>The Legacy of Lake Agassiz in the Canadian Prairies</i> Alec Aitken
Mar. 20	AGM and Members' Images Night
Apr. 17	<i>Two Centuries of Ornithology in Saskatchewan</i> Frank Roy, Stuart Houston & Al Smith
May 15	Spring Picnic

Board of Directors

President	Joan Feather	306-653-3160	.....	jfeather@sasktel.net
Past President	Stan Shadick.....	306-652-5975	.....	stan.shadick@usask.ca
Vice President	Marten Stoffel	306-934-3769	.....	asio.otus@sasktel.net
Secretary	Sylvia Raginski	306-477-5942	.....	osvcrag@sasktel.net
Treasurer	Yvonne Cuttle	306-374-5228	.....	cuttyg@shaw.ca
Director	Bruce Boldt.....	306-239-4811	.....	bruce_northernlites@yahoo.ca
Director	Greg Fenty.....	306-343-6943	.....	greg.fenty@gmail.com
Director	Robin Karpan	306-242-7731	.....	karpan@sasktel.net
Director	Anna Leighton	306-665-6074	.....	leighton@sasktel.net
Director	Jan Shadick.....	306-652-5975	.....	jshadick@sasktel.net
Advisor	Robert Johanson	306-653-2610	.....	robert.johanson@usask.ca

The board of directors meets about once a month, usually in the week before the monthly meeting. If you wish to bring an item to the attention of the board, please contact the president.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 GE: St. Georges's Church	8	9
10	11 	12	13	14	15	16 Pike Lake birding YN: Feeders
17	18	19	20	21 November meeting	22	23
24 President Murray Park bird walk	25	26	27	28	29	30

1 December	2	3	4	5 GE: Ron Jensen's Costa Rica	6	7 Gardiner Dam birding
8	9	10	11	12 December meeting	13	14 Clark's Crossing CBC
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 	26 Saskatoon CBC	27	28
29	30	31 				

Membership Renewals

All SNS memberships expire on December 31; failure to renew by then may interrupt delivery of your newsletter. Check the upper right corner of your mailing label to see the year your membership expires. New memberships paid after July 1 will continue through the following year. Donations qualify for a tax receipt. Mail in your completed form or bring it to the next meeting.

Membership in the Saskatoon Nature Society

The Saskatoon Nature Society publishes ten newsletters per year informing members of field trips and other activities. Except in the summer, monthly meetings present speakers on a wide range of nature related topics.

Please check: Renewal New Member Change of Address

Membership Category: Individual \$20/yr Family \$30/yr Junior (<19yrs) \$5/yr

Date: _____

Name(s) (please print neatly): _____

(Names/Ages of Children): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

email: _____ Phone: _____

Membership fee\$ _____/yr x _____ year(s) (one to five) = \$ _____

Donation (designate a fund if desired) \$ _____

Conservation and Education Nature Capital Kids in Nature General Fund

Please do not include my name in any published list of donors

Option: Membership in Nature Saskatchewan (see below) \$ _____

TOTAL (please make your cheque payable to Saskatoon Nature Society)..... \$ _____

Mail to: Treasurer, Saskatoon Nature Society, Box 448, RPO University, Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8

If in the past year you have contributed your time to any SNS activity, please estimate the number of volunteer hours: _____

Membership in Nature Saskatchewan

The Saskatoon Nature Society is affiliated with the provincial society, Nature Saskatchewan, but membership is separate and the fee schedule is different. Renewing your provincial membership through SNS earns us a \$2 commission. Nature Saskatchewan is a strong advocate for conservation and education in the province. Benefits of membership include the quarterly journal *Blue Jay*, the quarterly newsletter *Nature Views* and spring and fall meets at various locations in the province. More information is available on their web site: www.naturesask.ca.

<u>Category</u>	<u>One Year</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Five Years</u>	
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65	<input type="checkbox"/> \$95	
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$115	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15			
Senior (>64yrs)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
Foreign	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$115	

Donation: \$ _____