

The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan



is pleased to present its
17th Annual General Meeting and Workshop
“Balancing Conservation and Profit”

February 17-18, 2012
Conexus Arts Centre
200 Lakeshore Drive
Regina, SK

NPSS registration info - (306) 668-3940

Please note: Due to allergies of staff and attendees, this is a fragrance-free event.

Friday, February 17th

- 5:45 p.m.** Registration
6:00 p.m. Presentation of Volunteer of the Year Awards and Member Slides
7:00 p.m. Keynote Address: Broadening the Experience - Jonathon Potts (Tourism Saskatchewan)
8:00 p.m. Wine and Cheese Reception

Saturday, February 18th

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration & Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Opening Remarks and Annual General Meeting (during breakfast)
9:30 a.m. Wrap it up! The End of the Regina Plain Seed Nursery – Kerry Hecker (NPSS)
10:00 a.m. Coffee break and networking
10:15 a.m. Trails - a Gateway Through Rare Habitats or an Open Door to the Heart of Canadians? – Colin Schmidt (Parks Canada)
10:50 a.m. Effects of ATV Activity on Native Grasslands Near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan – Erika Donald (SIASST)
11:25 a.m. The Wild West Side Story – Gord Vaadeland (Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards)
12:00 a.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Ziplines and Eco-Tourism: COME OUT AND PLAY! – Jori Kirk (Cypress Hills Eco-Adventures)
1:30 p.m. New Era in Parks? Or Just Becoming Better at What We Do? - Melody Nagel-Hisey (Parks Department, Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport)
2:00 p.m. Coffee break and networking
2:15 - 5:00 p.m. Workshop: Case Studies in Natural Areas Management: Saskatoon’s Northeast Swale and Regina’s Wascana

Broadening the Experience

Saskatchewan offers a wide array of tourism experiences. Our native flora and fauna drive some people to make special trips to different parts of the province. More often, though, they enhance other tourism experiences. This creates opportunities to educate visitors about important ecological issues, while still providing them with an entertaining experience. This presentation will explore the link between these two objectives.



About the presenter: Jonathan Potts is the Director of Marketing for Tourism Saskatchewan. Jonathan worked with Fast Consulting for ten years, serving for six years as Senior Consultant at the firm. During his career with the company, he led numerous strategic planning, market research, and community consultation projects in a number of industry sectors, with specific focus on tourism. From 2003 to 2006, Jonathan served on Tourism Saskatchewan's Peer Review Committee. From 2006 to 2010, Jonathan served as Director of Industry Development at Tourism Saskatchewan, working with his team to oversee the development and implementation of numerous planning and capacity-building initiatives across the province. In May, 2010, Jonathan took on the role of Tourism Saskatchewan's Director of Marketing.

Jonathan also serves on numerous committees and boards, including but not limited to, Rural Highway Advisory Committee; Provincial Highway Signage Executive Committee; Aboriginal Tourism Association of Saskatchewan, Incorporated; Provincial Fisheries Advisory Committee; Parks Advisory Committee; and SAMA Commercial Advisory Committee.

Wrap it up! The End of the Regina Plain Seed Nursery

The Regina Plain Seed nursery was laid out and planted in 1999 by the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation. The intent was to propagate native prairie plants from seed collected in the few small remaining sites on the Regina Plain Heavy Clay soil type. In the years since then, much seed has been collected. Many small school "prairie planting projects" have been completed using this seed. Recently, lack of funding, overabundance of weeds, and changing land use around the site have led to the logical step of closing this project down in fall 2011. We thank those responsible for the project, and celebrate the accomplishments these seeds have produced!



About the presenter: Kerry Hecker works for the Canadian Wildlife Service (part of Environment Canada), managing the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area and Migratory Bird Sanctuary (LML NWA). This is a highly varied job, and includes living on-site to keep an eye on things, native prairie restoration, range assessments, habitat management, bird and mammal monitoring, and overseeing research projects. Kerry developed a love of the prairies early, spending summers exploring on the family farm near Maple Creek, and wandering around the Cypress Hills on weekends. She earned a B. Sc in Biology from the University of Regina in 1996 and an M. Sc in Biology from Carleton University in 1999. During her university education, summer jobs consisted of assisting with research on cool critters in an array of marvellous places. She started "real work" with the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation in the Native Prairie Stewardship Program. After a brief stint in her own business, she jumped at the opportunity to work with Dean Nernberg doing native prairie restoration at the LML NWA, and has been there ever since. In her spare time, she enjoys leading a choir,

hunting, distance running, photography, cooking, and canoeing and camping with her husband Lowell Strauss. Kerry and Lowell are parents to a marvellous little boy who is 2 years old.

Trails - a Gateway Through Rare Habitats or an Open Door to the Heart of Canadians?

This presentation will be a look at the two-sided program of Parks Canada - to protect and present our natural and cultural heritage - using trail design and building as a metaphor for that 'balancing' challenge. Colin will present some information on how visitation of a landscape creates a stronger sense of stewardship than merely being aware of it, and the role that trails plays in this aspect. Obviously, he'll review the efforts park staff made to manage impacts on the landscape while creating the best trail opportunity, and hopefully, a stronger connection to the hearts and minds of Canadians.



About the presenter: Colin is the Visitor Experience Product Development Officer and has been working with Parks Canada for going on 15 years, with most of those years at Grasslands National Park. He has always worked within the Visitor Services and Interpretation program, where he gets to celebrate this prairie landscape with visitors. He was born and raised in the prairies (Saskatchewan and Alberta), and while he lived for a time in British Columbia, his heart never left. Colin has a wonderful family with two fun children that he and his wife are raising in Val Marie, SK and all that this has to offer. He's just recently moved into a timber-framed, straw bale house...and that was an adventure. Colin likes to get at the piano and stay active, either on skates, running shoes or bicycle, during the gaps of time not taken up by family, work and community volunteer stuff.

Effects of ATV Activity on Native Grasslands Near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Objectives: To assess the impact of ATV use in sensitive boreal forest grasslands near Prince Albert, SK, and to create land use management strategies.

Methodology: To quantify the variety and abundance of weed species colonizing a mixed-grass meadow, 14 transects were overlaid on a 1.5 ha area containing native grassland and an ATV trail. Native vegetation and weedy species were inventoried along the parallel transects. Weed densities were visually estimated and given a rank according to density in intervals of <20, 20–50, 50–100, 100–200, 200–500, and >500 occurrences per site. Slope, aspect, and soil texture were also noted. A GIS model will be created using kriging to interpolate the data.

Results:

The study area was a mixed-grass meadow with rolling terrain and slopes ranging from 10–40°, in a White Spruce/Jack Pine forest within the Boreal Plain Ecozone. Soil orders included predominantly Dark Grey Chernozems; soil type was loamy sand. Vegetation was composed of 1–2% trees, 5% shrubs, 70 – 80% graminoids (including *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Calamovilfa longifolia*, *Elymus trachycaulus ssp.subsecundus*, *Festuca saximontana var.saximontana*, *Hesperostipa comata*, *Koeleria macrantha*, and *Schizachyrium scoparium ssp.scoparium*), 10% forbs, and 1–5% lichens.

Fourteen weedy species, including one noxious species (*Arctium minus*) and seven invasive species (*Agropyron cristatum*, *Amaranthus retroflexus*, *Chenopodium album*, *Descurainia sophia*, *Plantago major*, *Setaria viridis*, and *Thlaspi arvense*) were observed. Weeds were observed on 12 out of 14 transects; they were found to have colonized the disturbed areas contiguous with the ATV-created tracks and were not found in undisturbed areas of the meadow.

Significance: Land use management strategies will be discussed.

About the presenter: Ericka Donald is a second year student in the Integrated Resource Management Program at SIAST. Integral to the program is a student research project, requiring each student to design, conduct and analyze the results of



their research. This past summer, Ericka worked as a field botanist in Alberta. Her work in boreal and grasslands combined with an interest in conservation inspired her to choose as her project a study examining the impact of ATV use in a sensitive site in the Nisbet Forest, south of Prince Albert. She hopes that her project will help in the development of a long term management plan for the area.

The Wild West Side Story

Since 1969, Prince Albert National Park (PANP) in central Saskatchewan has been home to Canada's only free ranging herd of plains bison still within historic range. In recent years, the herd has begun to frequent farms and ranches along the southwestern boundary of PANP. As a result, local landowners, PANP, and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment have been faced with some interesting challenges regarding how to proceed with managing this important population. Our presentation will look at the collaborative processes being used by the Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards (SRPBS), a grassroots non-government organization, created and operated by the Ranchers of the Sturgeon River area and dedicated to creating an environment where Plains bison can coexist with local landowners in a mutually beneficial way. Gord Vaadeland, Executive Director of the SRPBS and CPAWS-SK as well as the Ranch Boss at Sturgeon River Ranch, will give a presentation on how he has combined a passion for nature and wildlife with opportunity and how his work in the conservation field has positively affected his work with his own Sturgeon River Ranch and vice versa.



About the presenter: Gord owns and operates Sturgeon River Ranch, a horse based adventure tourism company on the Wild West Side of Prince Albert National Park. The Ranch has hosted guests from around the world as they come to view this unique area of the Province. Gord and the Ranch have twice been featured on the popular OLN program, Mantracker. He currently serves on the Tourism Saskatchewan Transition Advisory Team and Provincial Marketing Advisory Team.

Gord is the Executive Director of both the Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards and the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. He is also Watershed Awareness Initiative Coordinator for the Provincial Council of Agriculture Development and Diversification Boards.

Ziplines and Eco-Tourism: COME OUT AND PLAY!

1. An Introduction and Company Overview
2. How Cypress Hills Eco-Adventures Ltd defines Eco-Tourism
3. Overview of our Conservation Initiatives and Eco-Tourism Operations
4. The Future of Cypress Hills Eco-Adventures and the Eco-Tourism Industry in Saskatchewan



About the presenter: Jori Kirk is the President, CEO, & Founder of Cypress Hills Eco-Adventures Ltd (CHEA). Born and raised in Climax, Saskatchewan, Jori spent the majority of his summers helping out on the family grain farm and enjoying the outdoors in Cypress Hills at his family's cabin. He received his Bachelors of Commerce in Marketing and Tourism from the University of Calgary in 2008, which provided him with the building blocks to put together the concept and vision of CHEA; the only zipline canopy tour in Saskatchewan. Prior to moving back home to open this business, Jori held positions as a recruiter, a marketing coordinator, and a GPS specialist for different organizations in Alberta and also lived abroad in Australia where he worked various jobs in the tourism industry. Despite being a self-proclaimed workaholic, Jori still finds time to travel, give presentations, enjoy the outdoors, play his guitar, look after his

Norwegian Elkhound/best pal (Finlay), and fly planes. In addition to overseeing and managing all aspects of CHEA, Jori holds positions on the Cypress Hills Destination Area Coalition, the Regional Finance Network Advisory Team for the Southwest Enterprise Region, and Tourism Saskatchewan's Provincial Marketing Advisory Council. Known to most as the "Zipline Guy", he brings a fresh perspective to an already outstanding tourism industry in Saskatchewan and also carries with him a passion for business and adventure that shines through in everything he does.

New Era in Parks? Or Just Becoming Better at What We Do?

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park is one of Saskatchewan's major provincial parks in the system. Since its creation in 1931 the 'hills' have been drawing the ecologically curious, adventure seekers, nature lovers and fun-loving recreationists for an experience not found elsewhere in the province. What are the draws that bring park visitors in to the Cypress Hills? What changes have occurred in the past decades? Where are we going from here?



About the presenter: Melody Nagel-Hisey, Park Area Naturalist - Southwest Park Area accepted her first year of employment with Saskatchewan Provincial Parks in nineteen seventy something!! She discovered a passion for the outdoors and the freedom of working in a provincial park. She returned to college and university to complete a diploma in Recreation Administration and Environmental Sciences, and a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Outdoor Recreation all the while continuing to work summers in several provincial parks. She spent two consecutive terms working in the Parks Service central office in Regina and really learned to appreciate the opportunity to work in the field and returned to parks, landing in Cypress Hills permanently since 1993.

Workshop: Case Studies in Natural Areas Management: Saskatoon's Northeast Swale and Regina's Wascana

Participants will be treated to a screening of a documentary highlighting Saskatoon's Northeast Swale and a presentation outlining the Wascana natural area in Regina. Following this, participants will choose one of the two areas to focus on and engage in small group discussions on how to conserve these areas and create public awareness, and what role the NPSS could play. Experts from both of these natural areas will be on hand to answer questions and will circulate through the audience to guide workshop participants. Once the group discussions have finished, all group ideas will be shared and compiled for managers of these areas and the NPSS to use.

Striving for a Balance Between Nature and People in an Urban Environment



Jared Clarke was born and raised in Saskatchewan. He attended the University of Regina where he studied biology and completed his honours thesis. Currently he is employed as the Park Naturalist with Wascana Centre Authority. He is responsible for managing the Wascana Canada Goose flock, providing school group programming, running the Wascana Junior Naturalist program, conduct the Wascana MAPS banding station, as well as managing the Habitat Conservation Area and Waterfowl Park Display Ponds. Jared lives on a farm near Edenwold, with his wife Kristen. In the last two years, they have re-established 60 acres of native/tame pasture on their property where they use their herd of Boer goats as weed control.