



Native Plant News

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www.npss.sk.ca



Fall 2013

Ancient echoes



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) observed during the Ancient Echoes tour.

Herschel tour a ringing success

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive
Director

On Friday, Aug. 16, the NPSS explored the natural wonders of the Herschel area. This place has it all – fossils, First Nations artifacts and an abundance of native plants. **Continued on Page 6**

Bring your love of plants to Regina

The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan will be hosting its 19th Annual General Meeting and Conference on Feb. 14 and 15, 2014 at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina, Sask.

What's not to love about that?

This year's theme is "Creating Linkages" and will look at the fascinating topic of landscape ecology and how we as a society fit into it. The event is open to all and will feature top-notch speakers.

The AGM is one of the highlights of the year for our society and is not to be missed!

And you won't find a better deal anywhere, as registration fees are only \$50 for NPSS members, \$60 for non-members and \$40 for students. Memberships purchased at the time of registration entitle you to membership rates.

To register, please use the **form on Page 7** of this newsletter and mail a cheque, or use your credit card on our website store at www.npss.sk.ca.

A detailed agenda with speakers will follow soon. If you have any questions, please contact the NPSS at 306-668-3940 or info@npss.sk.ca. 🌱

2 Wild About Saskatoon wins award

4 Rare Plants and Ranchers off to a great start

7 Ethnobotany: Recipe for chokecherry soup

8 It's NPSS membership renewal time

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Native Plant News is a quarterly publication of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) and is one of the benefits of membership. Members are invited to submit articles, news, views, photographs and comments. Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the NPSS.

Deadlines:

	Submission	Publication
Winter Issue:	November 1	December 15
Spring Issue:	February 1	March 15
Summer Issue:	May 1	June 15
Fall Issue:	August 1	September 15

Membership Dues (Year end November 30th)

- Individual \$30
- Family \$45
- Student \$15
- Corporate \$200
- Life \$500

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

New Saskatoon group wins award

Wild About Saskatoon, the new collaborative group of individuals and organizations that includes the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, has won Nature Saskatchewan's Conservation Award for 2013.

The award was presented to Wild About Saskatoon member Joan Feather at the Nature Saskatchewan fall meet in Meadow Lake, Sask., in September.

The award celebrates the efforts of the group, particularly the successful NatureCity Festival that Wild about Saskatoon organized and hosted in late May. The festival drew over 1,200 participants, featured over 50 events, involved over 70 organiza-



tions and was featured in local and national publications. Not one to rest on its laurels, Wild About Saskatoon has already begun to plan its second annual NatureCity Festival from Sunday, May 25 to Saturday, May 31, 2014.

For more on Wild About Saskatoon or the NatureCity Festival, please visit their website at www.wildaboutsaskatoon.org. The NPSS will also post updates about the festival on our website and in the newsletter in early 2014. 🌱

Saskatchewan names a new park, reserve

With the stroke of a pen (we know it's not really that easy) Saskatchewan has protected two large tracts of land in the north, preserving habitat for plants and animals alike.

First, a new provincial park was established encompassing the old Recreational Sites of Emma and Anglin Lake. The new park, named Blue Heron Provincial Park, encompasses 11,168 hectares and borders Prince Albert National Park.

Second, a new ecological reserve was established 160 km north of La Ronge. The Pink Lake Representative Area Ecological Reserve is now Saskatchewan's largest provincially-designated protected area – nearly 3,660 square kilometres.

"The Pink Lake area covers a vast area of boreal forest which provides important habitat for many species including woodland caribou," Environment Minister Ken Cheveldayoff said in a press release in July. "The designation will help conserve this ecologically important area, while adding significantly to Saskatchewan's Representative Areas Network."

Designation as an ecological reserve means that no new industrial developments will be allowed in the area. No new leases or permits will be issued but those in place at the time of the designation will be grandfathered. Traditional activities by First Nations and Métis people, as well as recreational hunting and angling, will continue. 🌱

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Busy year for RPR

By *KRISTEN MARTIN*
Rare Plant Rescue
Coordinator

The summer of 2013 proved to be another successful field season for Rare Plant Rescue (RPR).

I stepped into the role of RPR Coordinator at the end of August, as both Sarah Vinge-Mazer and Laurie Johnson, who was filling in while Sarah was on maternity leave, left to pursue other employment opportunities. However, Laurie filled me in on all of the adventures of the busy 2013 RPR field season!

Due to budget restrictions, RPR had fewer field staff than in previous years, with just one search crew member in addition to the coordinator. However, this didn't stop the crew from searching many more new sites, monitoring known rare plant occurrences and visiting landowners throughout southern Saskatchewan to spread the word about plant species at risk.

For the first part of the summer, the crew focused their time and energy on searches for slender mouse-ear-cress (*Transberingia bursifolia* ssp. *virgata*), a species listed as Threatened under the Species at Risk Act. Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, we did not find any new occurrences of this species.

In addition, revisits to slender mouse-ear-cress locations from previous years turned up empty. The germination of this species is thought to be related to moisture levels in early spring, with fewer plants growing in dry years. It is possible that moisture levels in 2013 were not conducive for seed germination. However, seeds of this species may remain viable in the soil for years, so there is still hope.

In July, we shifted our focus to searching for smooth goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*) and western

spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*). Both of these species typically occur in the same types of habitats; along sandy slopes and in partially stabilized sand dunes and blowouts. Often only one western spiderwort flower opens per day, typically opening in the morning and closing by noon.

Although only a single new western spiderwort occurrence was found, 2013 appeared to be a good year for smooth goosefoot, as we found seven new occurrences! While searching for these two species, we also incidentally found seven new occurrences of beaked annual skeletonweed (*Shinnersoseris rostrata*), which is listed as an S2 (rare) plant in Saskatchewan.

Next, we monitored several known occurrences of hairy prairie clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*). In total, 313 plants were counted, all appearing to be in good condition despite the on-going threat of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) invasion. We ended the field season with several searches for tiny cryptanthus (*Cryptantha minima*). This species is notoriously hard to find, as plants can be very tiny (hence the name) and there are many look-alike species. Unfortunately, we did not find any new tiny cryptanthus occurrences in 2013, although we did find plants at two of the three known locations that we revisited.

Several new participants joined RPR in 2013, bringing the total number of RPR participants to 74 and together are helping to conserve over 80,000 acres of native prairie habitat! We would like to thank all of our participating landowners and land managers for their dedication to conservation.

If you would like more information about Rare Plant Rescue or rare plants in general, please contact Nature Saskatchewan toll-free at 1-800-667-4668 or by email at rpr@nature-sask.ca. 🌱



PHOTO BY TARA SAMPLE

Hairy prairie clover
(*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*)

Upcoming Events

January 2014

Weed Webinar Series
Foxtail Barley

Wednesday, Jan. 15
Regina, Sask.

Nadia Mori, PAg., a Regional Forage Specialist for the Ministry of Agriculture, will explain why the biology and characteristics of foxtail barley make it a difficult weed to manage. She will also discuss potential control options and their feasibility in perennial forage stands. If you have any questions, contact Nadia Mori at 306-946-3219.

Please pre-register at:

www.2.gotomeeting.com/register/268524530

SES Sustainable Speakers Series
"Future-proof your home: build with energy intelligence in cold climates"

Tuesday Jan. 21
7 to 8:30 p.m.

Saskatoon Public Library
Frances Morrison branch
Saskatoon, Sask.

Shane Wolffe will be presenting information from his book "How to Future Proof Your Home: A Guide to Building with Energy Intelligence in Cold Climates."

www.environmentalsociety.ca

Native Prairie Restoration & Reclamation Workshop
"Stretching our Boundaries"

Jan. 29 and 30

Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza
Regina, Sask.

The third Native Prairie Restoration/Reclamation Workshop will focus on "Stretching our Boundaries" to promote collaboration between the sectors/industries involved in native prairie restoration.

The two day workshop will include expert speakers, full break-out sessions dedicated to individual sectors, a poster session and tradeshow.

Deadline to register is Jan. 15.

Call the PCAP office at 306-352-0472 or email pcap@sasktel.net if you have any questions.

Find the registration form at:

www.pcap.sk.org

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.

Rare Plants and Ranchers program growing quickly

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

As the year comes to an end, we put another successful field season behind us. This year marked the second year of our Rare Plants and Ranchers program, and with the success we saw, there's sure to be many more.

Rare Plants and Ranchers is a program designed to work with land-owners who have at risk plant species on their land to help them find win-win solutions that promote the survival of



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Slender mouse-ear-cress (*Transberingia bursifolia* ssp. *virgata*)



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Smooth goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*) distribution on one ranch.

the rare plants, while also benefitting their ranch operations. This program is in collaboration with Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue program, as we draw from their stewardship base.

Last year we had five stewards agree to participate and we continue to work with them to implement solutions, and have match funding available to help facilitate implementation. In 2013, we also attracted an additional six stewards to our program, which made for a very busy summer.

I traveled from Estevan to Burstall and Elbow to Dundurn to conduct field work and collect information on these beautiful landscapes and the species at risk that

they hold. Most of what was surveyed was intact native habitat and some of the ranches covered vast swaths of

native prairie (several square kilometers), which is a rare sight anywhere and somewhat daunting to traverse on foot in 35 degree heat! At one point I accidentally ended up walking into Alberta as the ranch was so vast it spanned two provinces and did not have a border fence.

The effort was worth it though, as I was rewarded with new sightings of plant species at risk such as slender mouse-ear-cress (*Transberingia bursifolia* ssp. *virgata*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), and provincially-rare plants such as Spanish clover (*Lotus unifoliolatus*) and small lupine (*Lupinus pusillus* ssp. *pusillus*). Notable rare critters

spotted included northern leopard frogs

“

... (These) are salt of the earth people ... dedicated to conserving native prairie.

– Chet Neufeld

”

Continued from Page 4

(*Lithobates pipiens*) Sprague's pipits (*Anthus spragueii*), chestnut-collared longspurs (*Calcarius ornatus*), a loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) and Baird's sparrows (*Ammodramus bairdii*) among others. I also revisited populations of plant species at risk such as hairy prairie clover (*Dalea villosa*), small-flowered sand verbena (*Tripterocalyx micranthus*), buffalo-grass and slender mouse-ear-cress to collect information on their habitat.

In addition to all of the wonderful plants and animals, I also found a few not-so-wonderful species. Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) was unfortunately most commonly seen, as well as other provincial weeds of concern such as downy brome (*Bromus tectorum*). These species were mapped and eradication has been carried out on many popula-

tions, with the rest to be addressed next year. Strategies for long-term weed management will be included in all management plans that the stewards receive.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of this summer was to meet all of the great landowners involved in this program. With all of the environmental doom and gloom in the media these days, it is reassuring to know that there are salt of the earth people out there dedicated to conserving native prairie and that they are doing an excellent job of it! It is a privilege to work with every one of these individuals.

During the winter months I'll finish writing up the management plans for our six new program participants based on our findings from this past summer. I look forward to adding more partici-

pants in 2014.

If you own native prairie and have plant species at risk, I urge you to become involved in Rare Plants and Ranchers and Rare Plant Rescue. For more information on our Rare Plants and Ranchers program, see the article in the Winter 2012 issue of the Native Plant News or visit our website at www.npss.sk.ca.

For information on Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue program, see Kristen Martin's article on Page 3 of this issue of the *Native Plant News*, or visit their website at www.naturesask.ca

This project was undertaken with the financial support of Environment Canada (Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk) and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (Fish and Wildlife Development Fund). ✿



Small-flowered sand verbena (*Tripterocalyx micranthus*)

PHOTO BY CANDACE NEUFELD

Following ancient footsteps



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Participants of the tour walk past a teepee ring, partially hidden in the long grass.

Continued from Page 1

The day began by meeting at the Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre at Herschel, a converted school that now displays the natural and cultural treasures of the area. After browsing the displays, we embarked on an herbal hike, where participants learned about the native plants First Nations people relied on for centuries.

The area was important to the Blackfoot (though due to its sacred status, the land was probably neutral ground and was likely used by many different native tribes), and there are many artifacts from their occupation. It was also the site of one of the last documented plains grizzly sightings. Going back in time a little further, the area was also once an inland sea and many marine fossils have been discovered here, most notably three plesiosaur skeletons dating back 65 million years.

Herschel resident and Ancient Echoes interpreter Dave Neufeld lead participants

on a trip back in time, visiting the birthing stone, petroglyphs, buffalo jump and butchering site, where layer upon layer of bison bones were visible in an excavated pit and in the eroded creek bank.

Many different native plants were also found and participants were able to snack on some of the same plants that First Nations traditionally used and consumed, such as wild mint (*Mentha arvensis*), wild red raspberry (*Rubus ideaus*), pin cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*), saskatoons (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). We were also able to locate a dozen native grasses in a fairly short time, and saw many different late-season wildflowers showing off their colours. Unexpectedly,

we also found a single crocus (*Pulsatilla patens*) blooming.

To cap the day off, we returned to the tea house located at the back of the interpretive centre for some cookies and much needed refreshments. What a great way to cap off our summer field tour schedule!

To learn more about the area, go to www.ancientechoes.ca. 🌱

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Chokecherries can make a great soup

By SANDRA WALKER
NPSS Member

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*):

Grows in a wide variety of soil conditions, but prefers moist areas; on the prairie, it is often found in bunches or on the edges of bluffs. The plant varies from shrub to a small tree in size. The bark is a reddish-brown. Leaves are a long oval shape with pointed tips.

Traditional uses: Chokecherry was an important fruit to First Nations of the Plains, perhaps second only to Saskatoon berries. Both were used in pemmican, and were also blended into animal fat and put on flat breads. The dense wood of a cherry tree burns well and provides lasting heat. Straight, thin branches were used to make shafts for arrows and also make good roasting sticks. Thicker branches were used as digging sticks for root crops. The fruit was also used for paint on rock pictographs.

Bark from the chokecherry and other *Prunus* species was used as a traditional and folk medicine to treat cough and stomach ailments, but this is not advised (see warning below).

Modern uses: The fruit is often used to make jelly, syrup and wine. In Europe, the fruit is used to make a soup which can be served warm with a dab of sour cream, or converted into a desert by serving cold with whipped cream.

Warning: The leaves, pits and bark of *Prunus* species are poisonous. Poisoning and fatalities in people have been caused by consuming large quantities of the pits or by chewing the twigs. *

Chokecherry Soup

4 cups choke cherries
4 cups water
Sugar to taste
A pinch of salt

Simmer for 30 minutes, lightly crush the cherries with a potato masher and run the mash through a strainer. Take care not to crush the pits. Put the cherry juice in a pot and simmer for a few minutes and add sugar to taste. Serve hot or cold with a spoonful of sour cream. To convert to a desert, add whipped cream when serving cold.

Registration Form

AGM Registration deadline is Feb. 1, 2014.

Mail or fax this form & mail payment by cheque to:
Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan
P.O. Box 21099
Saskatoon, Sask. S7H 5N9
FAX: 306-668-3940

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City / Town _____

Postal Code _____

Phone (____) _____

E-mail _____

Registration Fees:

Friday Keynote Address and Wine and Cheese
Saturday Meals and Presentations

NPSS Member	\$50
Non NPSS Member	\$60
Student	\$40

Special dietary needs: _____

Other:

Individual 1-Year Membership	\$30
Family 1-Year Membership	\$45
Student 1-Year Membership	\$15
Non-profit Organization 1-Year Membership	\$100
Corporate 1-year Membership	\$200

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please note that the member rate is applicable only to PAID members. Memberships purchased at the time of registration entitles individual to membership rates.

For More Information Contact:

Chet Neufeld, NPSS Executive Director
Phone and Fax: 306-668-3940
email: info@npss.sk.ca
Website: www.npss.sk.ca

The 19th Annual NPSS AGM is quickly approaching. This year it is being held on Feb. 14 and 15 at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina, Sask. There will be a keynote address, film screening and reception on Friday night and the AGM will be held during breakfast on Saturday morning followed by a variety of interesting presentations. If you only wish to attend the film screening or annual general meeting portion of the weekend without breakfast, there is no charge. We hope to see all of you there!

As a reminder, the board decided at a meeting in spring 2006, that resolutions that are sensitive and pertaining to complex issues, including any directive not strictly that of the NPSS or pertaining to its activities, must be submitted in writing to the NPSS Board of Directors a minimum of two weeks prior to the AGM. The resolution must include adequate background information for Board review and a clear indication of why the proposed resolution should come from the NPSS.

Membership fees are due once again

Well, it's that time of the year again.

For those of you paying by the year, your NPSS membership fee is now due. But, don't forget, renewing your membership is now easier than ever!

Just go to our online store at our website (www.npss.sk.ca) and pay with any major credit card. It's fast, easy and secure. Please note there is a small surcharge added to memberships purchased online to cover internet banking fees. However, if you still want to mail a cheque you can do that, too.

Do you want to avoid having to remember to pay altogether? Why not buy a lifetime membership. It's cheaper, in the long run, and you can pay in installments if you can't afford, or don't wish to pay, a lump sum.

Thank you to for supporting the NPSS in 2013 with your membership dues and donations of time, support and money! 🌱



NPSS membership

Name: _____ Postal Code: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Phone: _____ Cellphone: _____

Email: _____ E-newsletter: _____

Please indicate if you would prefer to receive the *Native Plant News* electronically (if yes, make sure to include your correct email address), otherwise a paper copy will be sent to you.

Even if you wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, please provide your email address, as we will use it to send you event reminders and contact you at short notice.

Return this form and your payment ASAP to ensure your membership continues for another year or to begin your membership with the society.

- _____ \$30 for 1-year Membership
- _____ \$45 for 1-year Family Membership
- _____ \$15 for 1-year Student Membership
- _____ \$100 for 1-year Non-profit Organization Membership
- _____ \$200 for 1-year Corporate Membership
- _____ \$500 for Lifetime Membership (this can be paid by installments – call us for details)
- _____ Donation (The NPSS gratefully accepts donations which will be directed toward our membership activities and conservation programs.)

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