



Native Plant News

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www.npss.sk.ca



Fall 2018

Rare Plants and Ranchers Update

By *CHET NEUFELD*
NPSS Executive Director



PHOTO BY SARAH VINGE-MAZER

Assessing SAR habitat.

This past summer was once again very busy for the NPSS, with a lot of activity related to our Rare Plants and Ranchers program. This program, now in its sixth year, has been incredibly successful at helping to conserve plant species at risk (SAR) by working with landowners to implement beneficial management practices to benefit the species at risk and their land.

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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 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.

Explore Saskatchewan's Prairie from the Comfort of Your Home

Katie Doke Sawatzky, University of Regina master's of journalism student has just completed her master's project, <https://www.prairiecommons.ca>, which is officially live and ready to be explored.

On the homepage you'll find six links to various articles, radio stories as well as an interactive map and timeline. The purpose of this project was to investigate the state of native prairie in Saskatchewan, look at its history within the province and examine the ways in which it's valued by people with different perspectives. Here's a brief outline to get you started:

A spiritual home - Philip Brass takes youth hunting on native prairie on his home reserve of Peepeekisis First Nation.

A public resource - The story of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) and the effects of its closure on farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

A conservation priority - a Q and A with Public Pastures - Public Interest, a grassroots conservation group doing incredible work through collaboration, and a long-form article on a young couple's efforts to save prairie and raise climate-change awareness.

The NPSS provided input and is featured in the project. According to Katie, the project was a challenging and rewarding experience. We think it's a great resource that everyone should explore. Congratulations on a job well done Katie!

As mentioned in an announcement in this newsletter, Katie will be one of the speakers at our upcoming annual general meeting and conference on February 2-3, 2019 in Saskatoon, SK so if you'd like to learn more about her project and meet her in person, register now. ✨



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

One of Saskatchewan's prairie treasures.

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Here's how it works: the NPSS visits participating landowners and conducts a landowner interview to determine historical and present-day factors such as grazing and fire regimes, invasive species threats, management issues or any other pertinent information that would give context to the current SAR situation on the land. Following the interview, a site assessment is conducted to gather information on the current condition of the land through a series of range and riparian health assessments, photo plots, invasive species assessments, visits to SAR populations and anything else that could contribute relevant information toward the development of a management plan. Using the information collected, a site-specific management plan is produced and given to the landowner. Ongoing monitoring, logistical support and dollar for dollar cost sharing from NPSS helps the landowner implement the plan's recommendations and manage the area in the long-term.

Because we try to monitor each property at least every 5 years, in 2018 we monitored 3 properties that were initially assessed in 2013. Two were large properties in the Burstall Sand Hills north of Burstall, SK. These properties contain SAR such as Smooth Goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*) (Threatened), Slender Mouse-ear-cress (*Transberingia bursifolia* ssp. *virgata*) (Threatened) and provincially-rare plants like Small Lupine (*Lupinus pusillus* ssp. *pusillus*) (S3). Our initial assessments in 2013 also revealed rare wildlife such as Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) (Threatened), Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*) (Threatened), and an incredibly rare butterfly called the Gold-edged Gem (*Schinia avemensis*) (Endangered).

Due to the sudden departure of our contractor Natasha Mackintosh, who got a position with the Alberta Government, we were left a little short-handed with lots of field work to do and not enough people to do it. However, Ashley Vaas and Emily Putz from Nature Saskatchewan, and Sarah Vinge-Mazer from the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre came to the rescue and helped to monitor the Burstall Sand Hills properties. They spent many days in the field retracing our steps from 2013 and collecting fresh data along the way. They also found Smooth Goosefoot, Small Lupine, Low Whitlowwort (*Paronychia sessiliflora*) (S3) and several rare species of wildlife. The data they collected, when compared to 2013,



Hairy Prairie-clover.

PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Upcoming Events

WildEcol Seminar Series Weeds Won't Wait! Establishing a Grassland Community with an Integrated Weed Management Approach

January 18, 2019 (3:30 – 4:30)
Saskatoon, SK
Katelyn.luff@usask.ca

Targeted Grazing Academy

February 5-7, 2019
Swift Current, SK
[http://www.pcap-sk.org/rsu_docs/
documents/grazing-academy-final.
pdf](http://www.pcap-sk.org/rsu_docs/documents/grazing-academy-final.pdf)
[Melanie Toppi aegp@sodcap.com](mailto:Melanie.Toppi@aegp@sodcap.com)
or (306) 621-3545

4th Annual National Invasive Species Forum

February 12-14, 2019
Ottawa, ON
[http://canadainvasives.ca/
events/4th-annual-invasive-species-
conference](http://canadainvasives.ca/events/4th-annual-invasive-species-conference)

Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference

February 19-21, 2019
Winnipeg, MB
<http://pcesc.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.



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PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Pin flags denoting Hairy Prairie-clover plants.

shows that the trend for the health of the properties is stable, and that certain threats to the SAR are being dealt with. Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) is one of the main threats on the properties and in the area in general. While it was found in both 2013 and 2018, it appears that management practices are having a positive effect on shrinking the area it occupies over time. Another invasive species, Downy Brome (*Bromus tectorum*), has been found on one of the properties but has not yet invaded the other property which is a testament to the vigilance of the landowner. In 2018, we have once again helped the landowners make improvements and better apply beneficial management practices by providing \$5000 in match funding to purchase and install cross fencing so that livestock and areas with SAR can be more effectively managed.

The other property that was monitored in 2018 was in the Dundurn Sand Hills just south of Saskatoon, SK and contains Hairy Prairie-clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*) (Threatened) as well as the provincially-rare Beaked Annual Skeletonweed (*Shinnersoseris rostrata*) (S2), Schweinitz's Flatsedge (*Cyperus schweinitzii*) (S3), and an as-yet-unidentified Bugseed (*Corispermum* sp.). Revisiting this site was like revisiting an old friend, as the property is small enough to know every twist and turn. Data collected in 2018 and compared to that collected in 2013 shows that the Hairy Prairie-clover population is stable. There is an area within an open dune that contains most of the Hairy Prairie-clover, and a few scattered individuals near a wildlife trail. The main population is stable, with good seedling recruitment, while the scattered plants along the trail have a more uncertain future, as there were fewer plants than in 2013 and no new seedlings. There are other areas of suitable habitat nearby with no Hairy Prairie-clover, so it's a bit of a mystery as to why it only occurs where it does on the property. And while there are the typical threats on the property such as invasive plant species, they are located far away from any Hairy Prairie-clover habitat and are isolated by natural features, so it's unlikely that they will threaten the Hairy Prairie-clover in the short-term. The biggest threat to this property is dune stabilization through vegetation encroachment. We are working with the landowner to step up efforts in order to keep these critical dune areas open.

By far the largest endeavour for our program this year was the addition of a new and very large property containing Tiny Cryptantha (*Cryptantha minima*) (Threatened). The property is approximately 6000 acres (2428 hectares), is comprised mostly of native prairie and sits along the South Saskatchewan River. With the dry spring and scorching summer, we were not expecting to find a lot of Tiny Cryptantha, as it is an annual and dependent on early moisture. However, our main goal was to assess Tiny Cryptantha habitat and identify any threats (although we did find a few Tiny Cryptantha). During the course of our field work, we not only found Tiny Cryptantha, but also found provincially-rare plants like Low Whitlowwort, Narrow-



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Tiny Cryptantha is TINY!

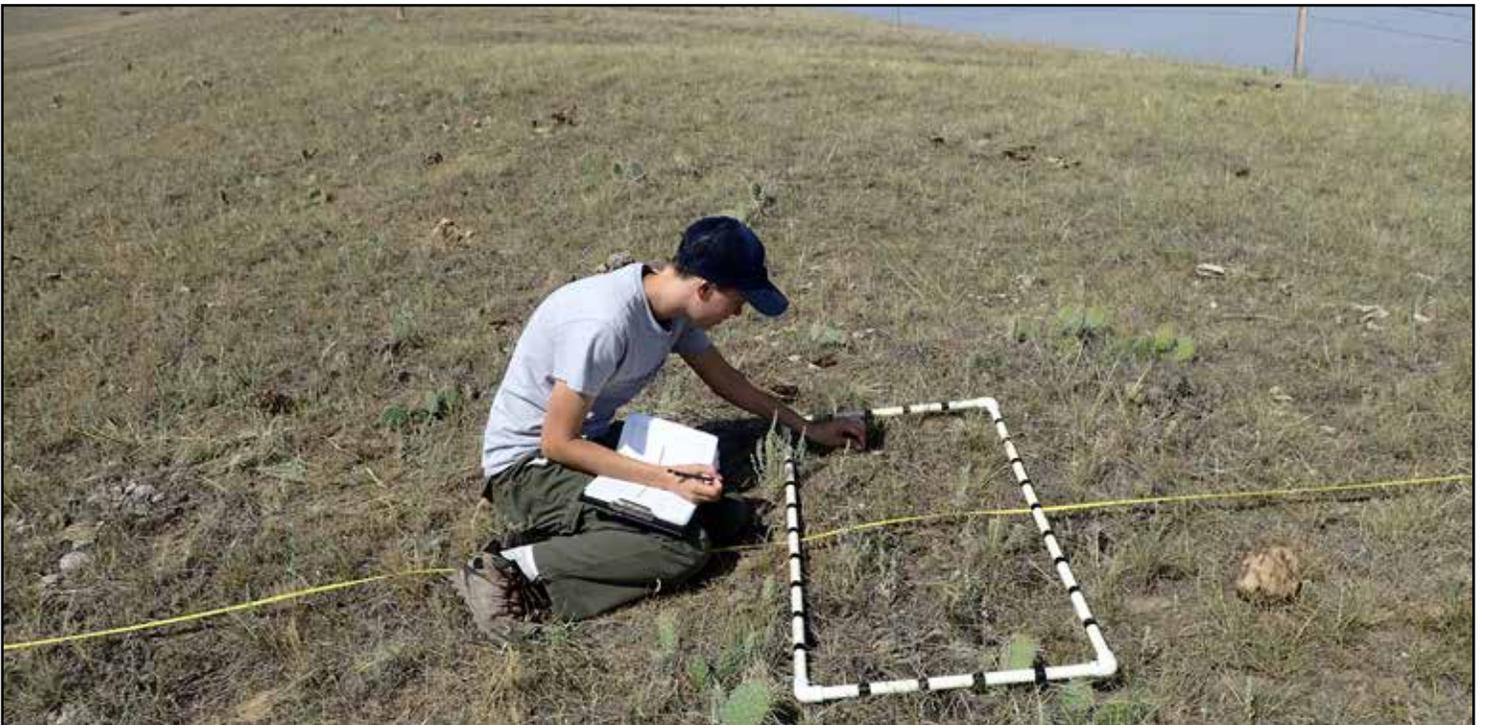


PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Catherine Boutin assessing Tiny Cryptantha habitat



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

One of the many False Buffalo Grass found.

leaved Umbrella-wort (*Mirabilis linearis*) (S3), Squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides* ssp. *elymoides*) (S3) and thousands of False Buffalo Grass (*Munroa squarrosa*) (S1) that stretched on for kilometers. While this property has a lot going for it, including good landowners and healthy prairie in most areas, it does have some challenges. First, there are large populations of Baby's Breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) in the northern end of the property that threaten to spread south. There are also small, isolated patches of Leafy Spurge that could easily spread. And some portions of the riverbank are in poor condition (erosion and invasive species), which may affect nearby upland habitat. These concerns have been addressed in our management plan for the land and are being communicated to the landowner. We will continue to work with him to ensure that his prairie improves and that Tiny Cryptantha has long-term stability.

For more information on our Rare Plant and Ranchers Program, please visit: <https://www.npss.sk.ca/news-and-events/projects/8>

Thanks to Natasha Mackintosh for her hard work on this project – we wish you all the best at your new position in Alberta. Special thanks to Ashley Vaas, Emily Putz, Sarah Vinge-Mazer and Catherine Boutin taking the time out of your busy schedules to help us complete our field work. 🌱

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
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Environment and
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Changement climatique Canada

Register Now for the NPSS Annual General Meeting and Conference

Plan now to attend the upcoming NPSS annual general meeting and conference on February 2-3, 2019 in Saskatoon. This year's theme is "What's New with Native Plants" and is packed with interesting topics and speakers. Our keynote speaker will be University of Alberta researcher Dr. JC Cahill, who will lift the veil on the fascinating world we rarely get to see: plant behaviour. Dr. Cahill's work was featured in a documentary entitled "Smarty Plants".

2019 will retain the two-day format of our annual general meeting.

Saturday's events will take place at Wanuskewin Heritage Park and will look much the same as it has in past years, beginning with breakfast and the business portion of our meeting, and then transitioning to a set of great presentations. In addition to our wonderful keynote speaker, we will have presentations from people such as Katie Doke-Sawatzky, a journalist who has created a web-based journey through the prairies based on her investigations and interviews. Other speakers include Brady Highway from Wanuskewin Heritage Park, two student teams from Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Kelton Braun from the University of Saskatchewan, and a fun and informative presentation from our very own Nadia Mori. Throughout the day we will also be hosting a silent auction featuring a portion of Dr. Vernon Harms' personal book collection.

Sunday will begin at the Meewasin Valley Authority office to deliver the Prairie Ecosystems learning module of our Saskatchewan Master Naturalist program, which forms part of the core competencies of the program, so anyone wanting to attain their Saskatchewan Master Naturalist designation must take it. The Prairie Ecosystems module will guide participants through the complexities of our rich diversity of grassland habitats in a fun and interactive way.

We are keeping our costs extremely low for this two-day event in the hope that as many people as possible will be able to attend. You will not find a better deal anywhere! As you'll notice in the registration form, there is an option to attend only one of the two days but attending both days gives you a discount, as does being an NPSS member. Memberships purchased at the time of registration will allow you to register for the NPSS member rate. You can either fill in the registration form included in this newsletter or do it all online on our website at <https://www.npss.sk.ca/store/events/2019-npss-annual-general-meeting-and-conference>

Thanks to our long-time partner and Platinum Sponsor, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, for supporting this event! 🌱



NPSS AGM and Conference Registration Form

Registration deadline is January 25, 2019

Mail this form with payment by cheque to:
Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan
P.O. Box 21099
Saskatoon SK S7N 5N9

Please Note: You can register for the AGM and/or renew your membership with your credit card through our store on our website at www.npss.sk.ca

Name _____

Organization _____

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Registration Fees:

NPSS Member..... \$70
(Saturday only = \$50, Sunday only = \$30)

Non NPSS Member \$80
(Saturday only = \$60, Sunday only = \$30)

Student \$40
(Saturday only = \$30, Sunday only = \$20)

Special Dietary Needs:

Other:

Individual 1-Year Membership \$30

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Non-profit 1-Year Membership \$100

Corporate 1-Year Membership \$200

Individual/Family Lifetime Membership \$500

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

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

For more information, please contact:

Chet Neufeld, Executive Director
Phone: 306-668-3940
Email: info@npss.sk.ca
Website: www.npss.sk.ca

Renew Your Membership on Time and Win a Prize

Well, it's that time of the year again. For those of you paying by the year, your NPSS membership fee is now due.

Go to our online store at our website (www.npss.sk.ca/store) and pay with any major credit card. It's fast, easy and secure. 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? Consider buying 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. All those who renew their memberships online by January 31, 2019 will be entered to win back their membership dues.

Thank you for supporting the NPSS in 2018 with your membership dues and donations of time, labour and money! We are extremely grateful that we are your charity of choice.

NOTE - As we are a registered charity, your donations to the NPSS are tax deductible. *

NPSS Membership Renewal

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Company _____

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- _____ \$30 for 1-year Membership
- _____ \$45 for 1-year Family Membership
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- _____ \$500 for Lifetime Membership (This can be paid by installments – contact the office for more information)
- _____ Donation (All donations are fully tax deductible and the money will be directed toward our education and conservation programs)

IMPORTANT: Even if you wish to receive a paper copy of the *Native Plant News*, please provide an email address if possible so that we can contact you at short notice with event announcements.

- _____ I would prefer to receive an electronic copy of the *Native Plant News* (don't forget your email address!)
- _____ I am interested in volunteering with the NPSS

Send this completed form and your payment to:

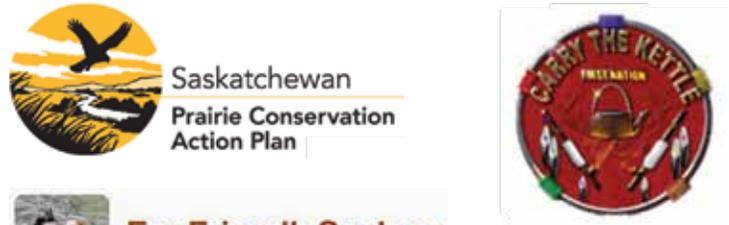
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P.O. Box 21099, Saskatoon SK S7H 5N9

You can also renew your membership with your credit card through our online store at www.npss.sk.ca

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