



Iris

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The Alberta Native Plant Council Newsletter



Another Busy Summer for Adopt-A- Plant Alberta

Janet Marsh and Heide Blakely keying plants at the NCC Witt property during the 2010 Botany Alberta event
Photo Kate Nesbitt

By Janet Marsh

Adopt-A-Plant Alberta (APA) was busy over the spring and summer with a number of activities for volunteer participation.

The spring saw a one-day APA workshop at the University of Calgary herbarium on May 15. Twelve new volunteers signed up at the workshop, including Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) summer interns. Dana Bush led a half-day field event at Nose Hill Park in Calgary the following day. The group learned about map reading, GPS use, and survey transects. They surveyed part of a large coulee searching for waterpod (*Ellisia nyctelea*), last reported in 1949. Although appropriate habitat still exists, no plants were found.

Over the May long weekend, Dana led a group to the Milk River Ridge area searching for hare-footed locoweed (*Oxytropis lagopus* var. *conjugans*). Volunteers visited several known sites and searched for new occurrences. Survey work resulted in two known sub-populations being extended and one new sub-population found.

On June 26 and 27, Elizabeth and Kathryn Podgurny, with the help of two other volunteers, inventoried a population of western blue flag (*Iris missouriensis*) located south of Cardston. This work was conducted in support of Multisar's effort to reassess the western blue

flag management plan for one of their partner properties.

NCC, APA, and ANPC hosted Botany Alberta on the July 1st long weekend at Cypress Hills Provincial Park (CHPP). An over-abundance of mosquitoes and water, especially on local washed-out roads and under tent platforms, presented some of the challenges

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Dana Bush (right) coaching volunteers on the identification of tiny cryptanthe (*Cryptantha minima*) at the Calgary APA workshop

Photo Nora Manners

for this botanizing weekend. Plant inventory lists were checked off at two NCC properties on the Friday. A summer storm drenched us in the morning, but with the large heated kitchen facilities at the main group campsite, near Elkwater, we were able to dry off and venture out to the second NCC grassland property in the sunny afternoon, where several additions to the plant list were keyed out in the field. On Saturday, the Alberta contingent joined the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan group of approximately 50 persons at the Visitor Information Centre in the Centre Block

of CHPP, SK, for two hikes, one in the fescue prairie and one in the lodgepole pine forest. Plants observed or keyed out were checked off or added to the Saskatchewan CHPP checklist. On Sunday, one group of volunteers visited Old Man on His Back Prairie Heritage Conservation Area & Interpretive Centre

southeast of Consul, SK, where a hike and interpretive events were scheduled. On the Alberta side of CHPP, a group of 11 spent the morning learning about 22 commonly occurring lichens, mostly on lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and white spruce (*Picea glauca*) that occurred along the Beaver Creek trail in Elkwater.

In July, volunteers helped with the rare plant monitoring of western spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis* var. *occidentalis*)



Participants at the spring survey for hare-footed locoweed (*Oxytropis lagopus* var. *conjugans*)

Photo Heide Blakely

Hare-footed locoweed (*Oxytropis lagopus* var. *conjugans*) found during the May 2010 survey

Photo Lindsey Wallis

in the Pakowki Lake area and tiny cryptanthe (*Cryptantha minima*) at the Ranchlands Environmental Reserve in Medicine Hat. Volunteers also completed baby's breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) removal at these sites, which in most cases involved hard work of digging by hand. Lisa Matthias (from Fish & Wildlife) and Ron Linowski (from Medicine Hat College) were the event organizers and leaders.

On the July 23–25 weekend, volunteers gathered at Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park with the staging point at the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation. They searched for and found Sitka willow (*Salix sitchensis*) growing on the Devonshire Beach area, no easy feat amongst several other species of willow. Also, near Lily Lake, they provided known population occurrence estimates of northern beech fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*) and documented some new population occurrences. Leslie Monteleone and Kristin Andersen led this event. ♦

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YOU ARE INVITED!

Southern Alberta Rare Plant Study Group



WHO: Adopt-A-Plant (APA) volunteers;
anyone interested in botany & rare
plants

WHERE: University of Calgary herbarium (basement,
Biological Sciences Building)

WHEN: Second Saturday of every month from
noon to 4:00 p.m.

FORMAT: These will be informal events allowing people to
come and go as they need.

Each month's topic/agenda will be announced on the APA
website at www.ab.adoptaplant.ca. Subject matter will be
designed to meet the learning needs of APA volunteers yet
allow opportunities for more advanced botany work. Based
on demand, some sessions on field techniques may also be
held (navigation, GPS use, plant collection). Experienced
botanists will be in attendance
at each meeting.

**December 11, 2010
University of Calgary
herbarium
noon to 4:00 p.m.**

Please bring in any specimens
that you have collected over the
summer so that you can have their
identification verified. If you plan to
bring specimens, please contact
Leslie Monteleone in advance so
comparison specimens may be
pulled from the herbarium. Also,
let us know if there are certain
families or species that you would
like to study, so we can plan for the
upcoming winter sessions.

**Come and join us.
All are welcome!**

For additional information
contact Leslie Monteleone at
lesliemonteleone@hotmail.com or
Nora Manners at
manners@toughcountry.net.



New Weed Control Act Proclaimed

In June 2010, a new Alberta
Weed Control Act was
proclaimed. The new Act
and associated Regulations
can be found on our website
home page at www.anpc.ab.ca. ♦

Thanks to . . .

Ed Karpuk

Iris has published at least one “thank you” to Ed Karpuk, but given the years that he has unselfishly contributed to ANPC, there really should have been more.

Ed served first as Central Director from 1998 until 2001, when he bravely moved into the Vice-president position and then to President in 2003, promising to serve a two-year term.

Ed’s contributions to ANPC show the same thoroughness, dedication, and conscientiousness that marks all that he does. When, for example, Ed provides lunch for the meetings, it is a complete meal – including appetizers and dessert and often a homemade entrée with recipe available (hint: get the one for vegetarian chili)! Ed, first in cahoots with Eileen Ford, then later with the help of Tony Blake, has provided lunch for all the executive meetings for years, ever since the Board decided to hold

them in Red Deer. His reasoning? Everyone else had to drive; he should be doing something as well.

Do you recall that Ed signed on as President for a two-year term? At the end of that term, he announced his retirement, but no one stepped up to take over. Although some might just have walked away, Ed stayed on as “allegedly past but really continuing President.” That was a bit of an awkward title, perhaps, but his role was critical to get ANPC through a difficult period.

When Kelly Ostermann stepped up to so ably take command in 2006, Ed was in position to walk away with head held high after a job well done (and very possibly Shelly, his wife, was hoping he would). But Ed saw that someone was needed to assist with liaison between



Ed with Kelly Ostermann at the Dandelion Festival in Edmonton
Photo Laurie Hamilton

the Adopt-A-Plant Alberta (APA) committee and ANPC, so he continued on to assist in that regard. Anyone who has been with Ed on the Botany Alberta or APA fieldtrips knows his boundless energy and his enthusiasm for field work and for soils in particular (please Ed, not another soil pit!).

It would be impossible to list all the ways that Ed has contributed to ANPC, but look at the photos of his enthusiastic participation in the Dandelion Festival, and you can see the spirit of that contribution. ♦

ANPC Receives the Emerald Award!

In recognition of promoting knowledge of Alberta’s native plants; conserving Alberta’s native plant species and their habitats; and preserving plant species and habitat for the enjoyment of present and future generations, the ANPC received the 2010 Emerald Award in the Not-for-Profit Association category.

For more information, please visit: http://www.emeraldfoundation.ca/emerald_awards/past_recipients/2010/alberta_native_plant_council/view ♦



Emerald Award
Photo James Posey

Cheryl Bradley



Cheryl busy in the field
Photo Lorne Fitch

Cheryl embodies the spirit of what ANPC is at its core – a group of people who are concerned, who care, and who are willing to take action to try to make things better. Cheryl simply takes this to a level that few others achieve.

Cheryl initially served on the Board in 1988, on the Conservation Action Committee. In 2006, she rejoined the executive as Southern Director for ANPC. Though she is no longer on the ANPC Board, Cheryl continues to do much work for native plant conservation because she has a love for the prairie.

The list of Cheryl's accomplishments is long. Some of this work she has done as ANPC director, but most of it she would have done anyway.

Cheryl's calm, reasoned approach to issues is her hallmark, and her well-researched and well-written position papers have earned her respect from all sides. A comprehensive piece on minimizing disturbance from wind farming on prairie grasslands is among her most recent research and writing.

The list of awards Cheryl has received is impressive – including an Emerald Award in 2004 for Individual Commitment.

You might expect that as Cheryl and her husband Lorne have begun more and longer travels, her work on conservation in Southern Alberta would begin to taper off. However, time away will undoubtedly give Cheryl new perspective, and when she comes back recharged – look out! ♦

Fragments of the Rocky Mountains ANPC Workshop for 2011

The ANPC's 2011 Workshop and AGM are now being planned and will be held in late April or early May 2011.



The theme for 2011 is "Fragments of the Rocky Mountains." Details on the venue and program will be available on our website (www.anpc.ab.ca) as they are developed.

Stay tuned! ♦



Iris is published three times a year by ANPC. The Council aims to increase knowledge of Alberta's wild flora and to preserve this diverse resource for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

If you have an announcement, article or other item, you are invited to submit it to the editor for publication. Items concerning native plants will be given highest priority.

The editors reserve the right to edit submissions, but will review changes with the authors whenever possible. Disputes will be resolved in favour of the audience.

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Submission deadline for the next issue:

January 30, 2011

A subscription to *Iris* is included with membership in the ANPC. To join, contact the secretary, or check our website, www.anpc.ab.ca.

ANPC Board speaks on your behalf for native grasslands

October 2010

Premier Ed Stelmach

Re: Proposed Sale of Public Lands Comprised of Native Grasslands

The Alberta Native Plant Council is a voluntary, non-profit organization that has been working since 1986 to promote knowledge and conservation of the native plants and vegetation of Alberta. It has recently come to our attention that Cabinet is considering a proposal to sell 25 sections of public lands comprised of native grasslands. By way of this letter we are expressing our concerns to you about this proposal as there appears to be no other avenue for public input into this decision.

Native grasslands constitute about five percent of the provincial land base, and yet support approximately half of the rare ecological communities (grassland, shrubland and wetland), 40% of rare vascular plant species, and 70% of mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species considered “at risk” or “may be at risk”. Several of these species are designated under legislation that requires federal and provincial governments to protect them. Large blocks of native prairie are few and of high environmental significance.

The large contiguous block of native prairie being considered for sale in this instance can be expected to support plant communities and rare vascular plant and wildlife species that are considered at risk and of high environmental significance. We would appreciate receiving a legal description of the lands under consideration for sale along with information about any biodiversity surveys that have been conducted or are planned, including information provided by Fish and Wildlife and the Alberta Conservation Information Management System (ACIMS) of Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

We also would appreciate a more meaningful avenue for obtaining information and providing input regarding this proposed divestiture of our public heritage.

Yours truly,

Kelly Ostermann,
President

cc: Hon. Mel Knight, Minister, Sustainable Resource Development
Hon. Cindy Ady, Minister, Tourism Parks and Recreation ♦

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Cancelled – the sale of Bow Island Grazing Reserve lands

The sale of native prairie in the Bow Island Grazing Reserve has been halted.

Due, in part, to the efforts of non-governmental organizations like the ANPC, the would-be purchaser, SLM Spud Farms, announced that they are withdrawing their offer.

To read more about this, check out the article in FFWD Weekly magazine at: <http://www.ffwdweekly.com/calgary-blogs/the-intern-net/2010/11/04/potatogate-overfor-now-554/>. ♦



Native prairie
grassland
Photo Laurie
Hamilton

Board responds to roadway building in ANPC-stewarded natural area

October 15, 2010

Honourable Rob Renner, Environment Minister

AND

Edward LeBlanc, County Administrator; Dennis Mueller, Director of Environmental and Community Services; Laurie Strutt, Manager of Planning and Development
Westlock County

Re: Clyde Fen Natural Area – Threatened by Recent Development without Due Process

As the President of the Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC), I would like to bring your attention to events that took place this year at the Clyde Fen Natural Area in Westlock County. The construction of an industrial grade road through the fen without appropriate assessment or planning has impacted the fens in this natural area, by altering the hydrology of the fen (flooding) and causing some erosion of adjacent peatland soils. The Natural Area contains at least three provincially rare vascular plant species, including two rare orchids, and populations of pitcher plants. Clyde Fen is not only a stewarded Natural Area, identified as a Protective Notation (PNT) site under the Public Lands Act and Land Titles Act, but it is also a wetland identified under the Water Act and covered under Alberta Environment's Wetland Compensation Guide.¹



Industrial use of the road adjacent to Clyde Fen

Photo Derek Johnson

Details of the history of Clyde Fen, the road installation and the regulatory process are in the appendix to this letter. ANPC has identified gaps in the process that should be addressed on provincial, regional and municipal levels.

Through ongoing discussions within the ANPC membership, we have identified the following gaps in the process:

- The Municipal Government does not understand wetland policy,
- The Provincial Government has not educated the Municipal Government on wetland policies (and potentially on other environmental matters),
- The Public Land Titles system lacks safeguards for certain notations, and
- The Municipal Government did not take into consideration the notation on the land standing report, a step that would have identified stakeholders requiring consultation.

The ANPC hopes that in response to this letter, the immediate outcomes from your Ministry will be the following:

- Circulation of this document to the Regional Advisory Councils and Watershed Planning Advisory Councils (those that currently exist and those that will be formed in the future),
- Circulation of this document to the Land Use Secretariat,
- Support of municipalities to identify Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in their jurisdictions and to include the ANPC in the consultation process to determine these ESAs, and
- Circulation of a memo instructing the RAC/WPAC committees to consider these gaps in their plans and to incorporate, as appropriate, the following specific suggestions on a regional level.

See *Clyde Fen*, page 8

Specifically, the ANPC strongly recommends the following steps be taken to ensure ongoing conservation of Clyde Fen Natural Area:

- Undertake a hydrologic assessment of pre- and post-disturbance surface run-off volumes for the Clyde Fen catchment area and a 1:100 year flood scenario assessment (paid for by the proponent) to support design of the road and culvert system.
- Submit the subsequent report to the municipality and Alberta Environment, Water Act approvals coordinator. Any recommendations within the report should be implemented by the proponent to restore pre-disturbance hydrological conditions.
- Require the proponent of the road construction to hire a qualified wetland ecologist to monitor the condition of Clyde Fen and make recommendations for follow-up work, if required.
- Submit each subsequent report, on an annual basis, to the municipality, Alberta Environment, Water Act approvals coordinator and the ANPC.
- Carry out monitoring over the next five years.
- Conduct a rare plant survey in spring and summer of 2011, and submit the subsequent report to the municipality, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and the ANPC.
- Raise the protection status of Clyde Fen from a PNT to an Order-in-Council (OC).
- Develop a process of communication and liaison involving the ANPC and all government departments (e.g., municipal, ASRD, Parks, LUF committees) that have responsibility for the welfare of Clyde Fen.



Damage to Clyde Fen from road installation
Photo Derek Johnson

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Ostermann, President

cc. Cindy Ady, Member of Legislative Assembly
Kali Hennessey, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Doug Bowes, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Fran Maddell, Westlock County

Footnote:

1. Government of Alberta. 2007. *Provincial Wetland Restoration/ Compensation Guide*. Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton, AB. ♦



Ineffective installation of culvert under road at Clyde Fen
Photo Derek Johnson



Digital Newsletter Coming Soon

ANPC will be offering a new digital copy of *Iris* to its members. You will have the option to select hard copy or digital copy of the newsletter on your 2011 membership renewal notice.

We feel this is an eco-friendly way to inform you about all of the news, opportunities, and events that ANPC and its members are involved in. Digital copies will provide a cost savings to ANPC, and the paperless copy will be in colour. ♦