



Partners in Preservation

A Volunteer Newsletter



Alberta Parks

Winter 2008: Issue #17

Submitted by Don Carruthers Den Hoed, Kananaskis Country

PUSH TO OPEN - The Alberta Access Challenge & KananACCESS Open House

From August 8th to 10th this year, the Friends of Kananaskis Country, Alberta Parks, and the Community Recreation Initiatives Society (CRIS) of Kelowna thought they were helping five people with disabilities experience the backcountry. What they didn't know was that this event impacted the lives of nearly seventy people.

Over the weekend, three people with disabilities became three teams of individuals testing their limits, conquering their fears, and feeding their adrenaline on a three-day backcountry trip in the Elbow-Sheep Wildlands Provincial Park. On Saturday, two people with disabilities were similarly inspired and challenged as they travelled to Rawson Lake in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park with a supportive and determined entourage. And another five individuals with disabilities felt the



Kayakers

spray on their face and the chill on their hands as they paddled Lower Kananaskis Lake in tandem sea kayaks equipped with outrigger pontoons.

In order to provide a more complete picture of the experience and its effect, we present some of the comments from participants – both those with and without disabilities – from the days after the event:

“My head is still buzzing after this incredible weekend, yet my body is definitely in slow mode ... This was a powerful experience for all involved!!!”

“How wonderful, to have this outreach program. I very much agree with your philosophy that being in nature has a healing effect on all of us.”

“It was inspiring to see the teams work together to get the TrailRider up the steep climb from the Tombstone campground, over the rocky terrain and to witness one of our fearless trail riders take his first ever dip in the glacial fed waters of a mountain lake...!”

“We were all on a level playing field... just a bunch of humans”

“Those 5 people I spent 48 hours with know more about me and understand me better than the people I've lived with for 6 years... it's amazing”



The Alberta Access Challenge and KananACCESS Backcountry Team

“Thank you for inviting me to become involved in the 2008 Alberta Access Challenge weekend. It was a real eye opener for me and I certainly enjoyed working with you and all the wonderful people who contributed so much in making such a special event happen.”
“I am grateful for having participated in that unforgettable weekend...”

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9820 - 106 Street
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Push to Open continued...

"It was so inspirational to be around the CRIS people and see their passion and commitment. It's also really inspirational to see your dedication to inclusion in the parks - nature is so therapeutic and it only ever makes people's lives better!"

"The weekend was a memorable experience and I look forward to volunteering again next year"

"For the whole weekend we felt normal"

"The Trail Rider was amazing as a vehicle to open access to rugged terrain, but not nearly as amazing as the people it brings together to use it. This weekend will be on my mind and in my heart for years to come. Thanks. The Access Challenge is something of which we can all be very proud to have played a part."

"Events like this crystallize ideas and stimulate others to take up

the challenge. Everyone is ready to put their weight behind the next event - next year - hint, hint!"

Thanks to adapted TrailRider wheelchairs, the mountains became accessible... but thanks to the commitment, energy, and over 1700 volunteer hours from people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, Kananaskis Country became inclusive – everyone was equal and everyone belonged. Alberta Parks plans to repeat this event next year, but also hopes to create an ongoing program to enable participation in parks and protected areas for persons with disabilities. Whether this is an internal program, a partnership with a group such as CRIS, the Friends of Kananaskis Country, or Calgary Outdoor Council (CAOC) remains to be seen. Regardless, the impact of the Access Challenge will reverberate well into the future as we continue to "push to open" the wilderness for all Albertans.

For more information or to get involved, please email Kananaskis.Outreach@gov.ab.ca.



The Alberta Access Challenge and KananACCESS Open House

Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association (SAPAA) Needs You

Submitted by Peter Kershaw, President, SAPAA

If you are a Steward of a Protected Area in Alberta you might not be aware that there is an organization that works as an advocate on your behalf. SAPAA has four objectives:

1. To provide a forum - Stewards can share information and ideas about caring for Protected Areas.
2. To promote the preservation, protection and restoration of ecological integrity in Alberta's Protected Areas.
3. To promote the use of Protected Areas for non-intrusive educational, research and recreational activities.
4. To ensure that Stewards' concerns are heard by government and by the public, particularly with regard to legislation and management policies for Protected Areas.

At annual meetings over the past few years, we have had presentations from Assistant Deputy Ministers and the Head of Stewardship Services for Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and discussed government policies and direction with these influential officials. This autumn, SAPAA representatives were included in meetings with the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation in a Forum on the Draft Parks Planning Framework. Due to the efforts of SAPAA and others, the proposed framework is undergoing significant revisions. SAPAA will also review the revised Draft over the next few months. SAPAA board members also represent Stewards on the Alberta Ecological Network, Parks Caucus.



For membership information contact Alison Dinwoodie (adinwoodie@shaw.ca) or Peter Kershaw (peter.kershaw@ualberta.ca). If we work together towards common goals, we can accomplish a lot.

Host Campout 2009

Last year's Host Campout at Jarvis Bay was well attended and a great time was had by all. For 2009, the Host Campout is scheduled to take place at Miquelon Lake Provincial Park on May 1-3. Contact Brad for additional information at Brad.Marshall@gov.ab.ca or at 780-427-9017. Hope to see you there!



Attendees of the 2008 Host Campout



Strengthening Stewardship
...investing at every step

Stewardship & Conservation in Canada 2009

4th National Stewardship and Conservation Conference
Strengthening Stewardship – Investing at Every Step
July 8 – 11, 2009 Calgary, Alberta

BACKGROUND

Stewardship, simply stated, means all Canadians are caring for our land, air and water, and sustaining the natural processes on which life depends.

Held every three years since 2000, the National Stewardship and Conservation Conferences attract between 400 and 600 participants from across Canada. These conferences bring together a diversity of stewards including individuals, groups, industry, business, governments and non-government organizations. This is the only national conference of its type where Canada's stewards can meet to discuss emerging issues and solutions for strengthening stewardship across Canada.

Major outcomes associated with previous conferences were:

“Caring for Our Land and Water (Guelph ON, 2000)

- Led to establishment of the Stewardship Canada website Portal to consolidate stewardship activities nationally
- Led to endorsement of Canada's Stewardship Agenda by federal and provincial governments

“Leading Edge” (Victoria BC, 2003)

- Articulated a bold 10-year vision to advance the role of stewardship and conservation in protecting our natural and cultural heritage
- Prompted the formation of Canadian Land Trust Alliance and a continuing education program for Young Conservation Professionals at the University of Guelph

“Valuing Nature” (Corner Brook NL, 2006)

- Development of the Stewardship Declaration which proposed key outcomes for delivery by 2009 and challenged all those involved in stewardship

The 2009 conference will take place at the MacEwan Conference & Event Centre of the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta, from July 8 to 11, 2009. The name of the conference and its overarching theme, are ***Strengthening Stewardship – Investing at Every Step***. The theme reflects that stewardship must exist at many levels, from grassroots action to policy development, and that at each of those 'steps' on the stewardship continuum, individuals, organizations, industry and governments must be invested to ensure Canada successfully addresses the national debt in our natural capital.

The 2009 conference will build on the successes and momentum established by previous conferences which have resulted in recognition of stewardship as a critical conservation tool. The program will open with a State of Stewardship in Canada report presenting progress made since the Corner Brook 2006 Stewardship Declaration, and will explore the challenges that lie ahead in making stewardship a part of living and doing business in Canada. Now at a pivotal point in history, ***Strengthening Stewardship – Investing at Every Step*** will identify policy changes, economic investment, and incentives needed to enable Canadians to become better stewards of their resources. The program will also address the top issues confronting Canada's stewards today.

Strengthening Stewardship – Investing at Every Step will chart a "roadmap" to give direction for Canada's future to energize, support, recognize, promote, integrate and measure stewardship activity around Canada. The conference will maintain and grow the partnerships that have advanced stewardship, nationally. Two major outcomes of the conference will be the development of a framework for the revitalization of Canada's Stewardship Agenda and a commitment to establish a new national body focused on inter-conference activities to advance stewardship in Canada.

www.stewardship2009.ca

4th National Stewardship Conservation Conference

Would you like to attend the 4th National Stewardship and Conservation Conference this summer in Calgary? Well, here is a chance to go and have your conference registration and accommodations paid for.

Alberta Parks is sponsoring three of our current volunteers

to attend. If you are interested please submit a short paragraph stating the reasons why you think it would be beneficial for you to attend.

Please send this information to Coral Grove by April 1, 2009.

E-mail: Coral.Grove@gov.ab.ca

Mail: Coral Grove
2nd Floor Oxbridge Place
9820-106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2J6

Hope to see you there!

Parks Day 2008



Submitted by Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

All aboard the bus en route to the 2008 Volunteer Conference!! As the location was in Grande Prairie, a bit further north this year, we decided to try something new; we offered bus transportation from Calgary, Red Deer and Spruce Grove, for those participants that did not want to make the trek by themselves. The idea was well received and a large number of attendees took advantage of this offer. Not only did it cut down on the carbon footprint made by the attendees, but it also provided a great opportunity for volunteers and staff to visit and network. Those that rode the bus had the added bonus of Irl Miller as their own personal tour guide, informing them about the interesting facts and history of the sites along the journey.

We kicked off the conference on Friday evening, at the Centre 2000. It was a great place to gather and visit with fellow volunteers while you enjoyed a beautiful view of the city from the upper levels and explored the museum in the lower level of the building.



Saturday morning started off with a plenary session presented by Joyce Gould and Scott Jones. Management planning and research were discussed, with opportunities for attendees to ask questions during the session and follow-up in person afterwards.

We offered four sessions this year. Two focused on current program topics for both the Steward and Campground Host programs. While the other two were information sessions, the first one about the Mountain Pine Beetle and the second one highlighted photos and sites in the northwest.

On Saturday afternoon, conference attendees were able to choose one of three tours. The first trip was out to Saskatoon Island Provincial Park to walk the trails and catch a glimpse of the trumpeter swans. This trip also included a stop at Saskatoon Mountain, an archaeological site dating back over 9000 years. Here, the visitors were able to take in the incredible views of the Rocky Mountains. The second trip was west of Grande Prairie, to Pipestone Creek, to explore the dinosaur bone beds. An added bonus to this tour was that Darren Tanke was able to lead. Darren is a senior fossil preparation technician at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology and works in the Pipestone Creek area. The third trip took participants north to visit Historic Dunvegan, located along the banks of the mighty Peace River.

After a busy day of exploring



some of Alberta's north, it was time to sit back, enjoy a great meal and celebrate as 10 individuals and groups were recognized for their hard work, dedication and contributions they have made to Alberta Parks. The evening wrapped up, as we listened to Darren Tanke tell us about the amazing diversity of dinosaur fossils that have been discovered in the Grande Prairie area.

After breakfast on Sunday

morning, everyone loaded up on the bus or in their vehicles and headed out to Kleskun Hill Natural Area. This is a unique little area that protects one of the last significant parcels of native prairie in the Grande Prairie area and is also where you will find the northern most badlands. Once on site, everyone gathered to hear Margot talk about the history and the significance of the area. Then all were free to hike around and explore the natural area and check out the historic buildings that have been moved on to the natural area. After a morning of exploring, we gathered for lunch and a bit of chit chat before saying goodbye and making our way home.

Planning for the 2009 Alberta



Parks Volunteer Conference has already started. It will take place in Lethbridge on September 18-20. We hope that you are able to join us as we explore southern Alberta, and in particular

Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park. And yes, we are offering the bus service again this year, so see you there!



Volunteer Award Recipients 2008



Parks and Protected Areas
Achievement Award
Jamie Gray



Parks and Protected Areas
Achievement Award
June Hills



Parks and Protected Areas
Achievement Award
Gerry Hurley



Outstanding Group
Steward Award
Glory Hills Junior Forest Wardens



Partnership Appreciation Award
Hay-Zama Wildland Park
Management Committee



Campground Host
Hospitality Award
Ralph and Joan Siska



Volunteer Leadership Award
Clara Wakeford



Staff Lifetime Volunteerism Award
Ed Whitelock



Steward Service
Excellence Award
Margot Hervieux

Outstanding Individual Steward Award ~ Bob Guin (photo not available)

Sherwood Park Naturalists

Submitted by Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

On December 5th, 2008, the Sherwood Park Naturalists, along with Strathcona County, held a dedication ceremony at the Sherwood Park Natural Area. The ceremony was in honour of Jim Pratt and his wife, the late Erna Pratt, both dedicated stewards of the natural area.



Jean Funk & Jim Pratt



Sherwood Park Natural Area Volunteers

Stevieville Volunteers

Submitted by Fred Hammer, Interpretation and Education Supervisor

The Stevieville site in Dinosaur Provincial Park offers rustic camping on the Red Deer River, adjacent to Highway 876. It has long been popular with local campers from the Brooks area. About eleven years ago a group of friends who were loyal 'regulars' heard of plans to change the site from a campground to a day use area. They contacted park staff to see what could be done to keep their favourite camping spot open. The discussions resulted in volunteer agreements being signed with the individuals taking on maintenance tasks from May to October each year. Since

1997, this dedicated crew have painted buildings more than once, shingled roofs on the shelter and outhouses, and installed fire pits, not to mention hauling dozens of garbage bags to the regional landfill, fifty kilometres away. They take great pride when tourists find a clean campground and even real paper in the outhouses. Thanks to the Stevieville volunteers' commitment of time and a willingness to share 'their' favourite camping spot, visitors from all over the world have a place to enjoy a basic camping experience in Alberta's spectacular badlands.



The photo showcases some of the Stevieville volunteers with their recently awarded 10 year service jackets that are part of Alberta Park's ongoing appreciation for community interest and support.

Steward Receives Emerald Award

Submitted by Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

Congratulations to Peter Sherrington for receiving an Alberta Emerald Award in the Corporate and Institutional Leadership Category.

Peter has been a Volunteer Steward since 1994. He has spent over 25,000 hours collecting data, has made

hundreds of presentations to school, community and scientific gatherings and has written or contributed to over 80 articles in both popular and scientific publications. The data collected has changed the understanding of golden eagle migration. He has made an enormous contribution to both the birding community

and to the leadership of the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation.

It must feel great to be acknowledged for work that you are truly passionate about. Peter, you should be very proud of your accomplishments. Congratulations!

Volunteering - A Family Affair

Submitted by Sue Walsh, Host - Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation

How on earth did a little sign in the window of Carson Cove Store at Carson-Pegasus Provincial Park, asking for Campground Host Volunteers, lead us to the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation in Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park? A simple phone call to the number listed put the whole thing in motion!

My husband and I have volunteered with various organizations all of our lives and we thought this would be a perfect introduction to volunteering for our children, ages 11 years and 13 years. We would be doing something we all loved – camping – and sharing our knowledge of Carson Pegasus Provincial Park with other campers – a match made in heaven- or so we thought! Alberta Parks had a different idea! We would be “newbies” to the Campground Host Volunteer Program and therefore they would not place us at Carson Pegasus – a very busy park. We would have to “get our feet wet” somewhere else first. We were initially a little disappointed but decided as a family, that if a year in some other park would ultimately lead us back to Carson Pegasus, we were in!

We were offered the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation (BCBC) at Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park. We had never even heard of the BCBC but we decided to give it a try! We had absolutely no idea what to expect or what the volunteer jobs would entail or if the kids would be able to contribute in a “real” way.



The Walsh Family

Upon our arrival at BCBC all our doubts and misgivings were quickly put to rest. The staff and volunteers of the BCBC and the Alberta Parks staff greeted us with open arms! Patti (the Executive Director of BCBC) and Jeff (Alberta Parks) gave us an excellent orientation and we were hooked! They made us feel like we were part of the Centre and everything it had to offer! The diversity of the experiences we had were awesome! My husband and son (both computer wizards) got to work setting up a nocturnal monitoring device that had been waiting for “someone” to have the time to set it up. My daughter and I did a display for BCBC for the Visitor Information Centre. We made and modified costumes for the Interpretive Programs at Martin River Campground. We welcomed visitors and gave tours of the Centre. We answered phones and helped with the gift shop. We did “roving” in the campground and helped at the Interpretive Programs in the evening. My daughter and her friend “ran” a Bird Banding demonstration lab at the Centre.

They also challenged visitors to identify pelts and win a prize. We even had the privilege of serving as a surrogate mother bird for 7 abandoned baby wrens! Those seven baby birds demanded to be fed every 10 minutes while they were awake. They would take the food offered, swallow, take 2 steps backward and poop! Every time without fail. We all learned a new respect for mother birds.

All too soon, it was time to leave the Centre. We had a wonderful time and we all agreed that our time at BCBC was the best family vacation ever. We immediately made plans to return again in 2008.



This year, we volunteered for the month of July. We didn't think that this year would be as exciting as last year – but we were wrong! We had a wonderful time! We made costumes, organized the library, organized and catalogued photos, greeted visitors, etc. . The whole family had various jobs to do and we all felt that we had, once again, contributed in a meaningful way to the BCBC.

We cannot say enough about the people at BCBC. We felt valued by the staff. They asked for our input and valued our opinion and expertise. They treated us with dignity, courtesy and respect! They appreciated our efforts and never failed to thank us! The staff makes the volunteer experience at BCBC extraordinary!



The BCBC Building

Volunteering at the BCBC is truly a family affair! It is a unique experience that reflects the unique partnership between Alberta Parks and the Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory. It is our sincere hope that this unique partnership is acknowledged, recognized and respected for years to come!

*Yours in volunteering,
The Walsh Family*



The Art of Nature - Bringing People Together in Fish Creek Provincial Park

Submitted By Patsy Drummond, Environmental Education Specialist, FCPP



Patsy, Jamie and June

Fish Creek Provincial Park celebrated a major success this past September 7th, 2008 – it's first Art in the Park Festival! This festival was a culmination of a year-long effort to create a program that would bring art

into our Provincial Parks. The program is called Art in the Park and is an ongoing, dynamic collaboration of volunteers, Parks staff and the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society.

The seeds of the Art in the Park program were planted about a year ago when two amazing volunteers walked through the front door of the Environmental Learning Centre, Jamie Gray and June Hills. Jamie lives in a neighbouring community of Fish Creek and is a current student at the Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD). June Hills is a recent graduate of ACAD and has a background as an art teacher. Both women were eager to see art brought into our Alberta

Parks, understanding the intrinsic connection between nature and art. Recently, they have both been recognized as Alberta Parks Volunteer Award winners. They received a 2008 Parks and Protected Areas Achievement Award for all their wonderful contributions.

With the desires from the three organizing groups outlined, the Art in the Park program was devised as an umbrella program with three different streams:

- ongoing art showcase or exhibition,
- a cross-curricular art-based environmental education program
- art programs for the public.

The Art of Nature - Bringing People Together continued...

To begin the programs momentum, an art exhibition took place at the Environmental Learning Centre from March to June 2008. Nine local artists exhibited artwork that revolved around the themes of conservation and nature appreciation.

Meanwhile, the Friends kept the ball rolling by offering continuing education in the arts. The Friends held 5 different public art workshops, such as Tile Mosaics, Nature Journaling and Watercolours. In addition, June Hills co-led a Tuesday Tours hike to explore nature through an artist's eyes.



After a few short months of various art-based efforts the team undertook the organization for the "Art in the Park Festival". Through many dedicated hours of advertising, emailing, meetings and set-up we planned the festival. The 22 artists who participated were composed of: 2 artistic guilds, the Indefinite

Arts (a society for adults with developmental challenges), the Parkland Solstice Festival Society and many individual artists, some of whom were new Canadians. Over 700 visitors joined us that day to take in the sights and sounds of the art and nature of the Park!

The festival was a day to celebrate the beauty and community of protected areas in Alberta. What better way to pursue the Alberta Parks vision statement than to "inspire society to enjoy and rediscover our connection with the natural world" than celebrating the expression of Parks through art?

I was kept very busy through out the day attending to the needs of the happy artists and interacting with smiling visitors. At one point, as I made my rounds, I was struck with the thought that the colourful array of visitors, volunteers, artists and their artwork collectively was a mirror, reflecting back what Alberta Parks is all about: diversity, community, beauty and passion.

Please join us Sunday, September 13, 2009 for next year's Art in the Park Festival. Please check out www.fish-creek.org or www.friendsoffishcreek for information about the Art in the Park program.

