

STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

No. 7 October 2002

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Saturday, October 26, 2002 at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer - Note this date! Details attached.

Hot topic: OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLES!

One of the most common problems which affects many Stewards' Natural Areas is the use and abuse by Off Highway Vehicles in our Parks and Protected Areas so we thought we would focus on this topic for our annual meeting. It should provide some interesting discussion! Please come with ideas for what works and what doesn't and hopefully you will get some ideas too.

We are pleased to have **Wayne Holland**, a Public Lands Specialist with many years experience, give a Land Manager's perspective. **Keri Barringer**, from the Environmental Law Centre, will tell us what the legal situation is for Stewards, and possibly offer some alternatives. Then we have **Calvin Rakach**, president of the Alberta Off Highway Vehicles Association, who has volunteered for the hot seat! He is keen to get more education among OHV users, so this could be an opportunity for us to get our message through!

WHY SHOULD I (RE-) JOIN SAPAA?

As this meeting is on a somewhat sensitive topic, it will be **open to SAPAA members only**. Membership of SAPAA, according to our Bylaws, is open to individuals (18 years or older) and/or representatives of a Natural Area organization who volunteer their time assisting in the care and management of Alberta's Protected Areas and who are in general agreement with the purposes of the Association. These include promotion of the 'use of Alberta's Protected Areas for educational and research purposes, and for non-intrusive nature-oriented activities compatible with each individual site'.

This Newsletter is going out once again to all registered members of the government Volunteer Stewards Program, including those who have just signed on as new Stewards. For their information, and others, SAPAA is a separate organization from the government Volunteer Stewards Program, although our members are all part of that Program. If you are currently a Steward of a Protected Area under the program, but have not yet joined us, we would be delighted to have you as a member. We will accept your membership at the door (AGM) and if you return the enclosed membership form before September 27 (30 days before the AGM), you would be entitled to vote at the AGM! (For existing members please send in your renewal or re-register at the AGM.)

A few years ago, with all the on-going government cut-backs and constant reorganizations, we felt there was a need for an organization to provide more of a forum for individual Stewards, to pass on information, help out with mutual projects or problems, and generally make sure that the Stewards voices are heard and that Natural Areas do not become part of the cut-backs.

We have an annual meeting, usually about the end of October, and occasional outings or other activities. Our Newsletter appears twice a year (more if some enthusiastic writers or editors would help out!)

In our short existence, we have met with Ministers on two occasions, provided input on the (now defunct) Heritage Act, and reorganization of the Parks and Protected Areas Division, and had very useful and authoritative speakers at our meetings, which also allows us to 'network' informally. So we hope you will all

be able to join us, by sending in the enclosed membership form. We do ask a small fee (\$15) to cover costs of mailing and meetings - but who knows, if you all decide to join, we could maybe reduce the fees next year! And because it is the AGM, **we are really looking for more volunteers for the Executive!** So please, if you think you (or anyone else whose arm you can twist!) could spare two or three evenings a year for Board meetings, we would really love to hear from you! The present Board has run everything since the organization started, and is feeling it's time for some new blood and initiatives. So please come next month and let's hear from you! And if you can't make the meeting, or want more information, **please call Alison Dinwoodie at (780) 437-7183, or e-mail adinwoodie@shaw.ca .**

ROVING STEWARDS

Members may not be aware that there are a few Roving Stewards under the Volunteer Stewards Program, who may have a certain expertise which could be useful to other Stewards.

A recent new member is Don Scott, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Alberta. His volunteer area and experience are in trail design and maintenance, including rehabilitation of trails, and the use of geosynthetics to construct and repair trails and prevent erosion. (I have already indicated that we could use him at the Cardinal Divide! - AD)

If you are interested, contact Sandra Myers (780) 427-5209 or e-mail her at Sandra.Myers@gov.ab.ca , who will be coordinating his activities. Or you can contact him directly to see if he would be available at (780) 492-2636 (University) or (780) 428-6028 (home), or e-mail jdscott@civil.ualberta.ca . (He is currently away for two to three months - AD)

Another Roving Steward is Deirdre Griffiths, who may be able to help with plant or wildlife inventories, and is an excellent photographer, if you are thinking about producing a brochure for your area. Again, contact Sandra Myers if you are interested.

USEFUL CONTACTS

People often say they do not know who to contact if they have are problems in their Natural Area. **The first line of defence is your local land manager**, and as we have said before, it is very important that he knows who you are and what you need to know. Don't wait for him to contact you - you often have to take the initiative. From my experience, you should try to meet with him at least once a year. Often there are larger planning exercises underway in your region, and it is important that Stewards have input at an early stage, rather than after the fact. The various departments have played so many games of musical chairs that often the Steward is the only person with the continuity of knowledge about their Natural Area.

The information for your contacts should be in your Steward's kit, as well as an indication of whether your Natural Area is in the 'white' (agriculture) or 'green' (forest) zone. There may well have been changes more recently, and often Sandra has not been informed about them. You might be able to track this information from the website www.gov.ab.ca/home/employee_listings/. Parks or Ecological Reserves come under the Department of Community Development management, while Natural Areas are mostly under the Department of Sustainable Resource Development, under the Public Lands Division (white zone) or Forestry (green zone). You may have to hunt a bit to find the contact you want! You can also find those higher up the ladder, if you need more decisive action.

Other websites can be found under the Community Development website www.cd.gov.ab.ca and following the appropriate links,

e.g.: **Enjoying Alberta - Parks /Protected Areas** - Volunteer info, stewards, sites, report forms etc.

or **Preserving Alberta -Parks/Protected Areas** - ANHIC (physical inventories), or Land Reference Manual (lists all P/PA with size and maps)

HOW PROTECTED ARE OUR PROTECTED AREAS?

Only Natural Areas passed by Order in Council (OC) are listed above, so if yours is not listed, you may want to find out what you can do to get it OC'd. OC gives it marginally more protection as it is then legally recognized under the WAERNA Act (Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act, 1981). This does not give it much protection from other activities, except that an official Steward may be recognized as a legal intervenor at any proposals or hearings. Other Natural Areas may only have a PNT notation, which is basically a flag on the land use, but not much more.

But the government can also change boundaries by OC at any time without prior notification, as I found out recently with our Whitehorse Wildland Park. It may have been 'only a minor correction', but it makes a difference to controlling access up one of the valleys. And of course the oil and gas industry seems to be able to go where they want in any Natural Area.

So, no, our 'Protected Areas' are not as protected as people seem to think. It is only the vigilance and actions of the Stewards on the spot who can ensure their continued (semi-) protected existence. **This is why your regular Stewards reports are so important**, as it is often the only way that this information percolates through to other departments for action. And by having our own organization, we can get the grapevine working more effectively!

COYOTE LAKE NATURE SANCTUARY FIELD TRIP - Saturday, June 8, 2002.

By John Woytenko and Pat Clayton.

It was a cool but pleasant morning when a small group of Stewards arrived at the Coyote Lake Nature Sanctuary. Our hosts, Eric and Doris Hopkins, and their dog Terra, greeted us, and after signing the guest register, we viewed the photos and displays which they had arranged for us. We then enjoyed a cup of coffee on their deck overlooking the placid lake, and were entertained by the antics of the resident squirrels and the coming and going of birds to the various feeders. Between the distractions, Eric told us the history of Coyote Lake, and how, when he and Doris first saw it, they realized that it was untouched and that the marshy shoreline had prevented it from being trampled by grazing cattle seeking water. They bought the land, and over time built their lovely house, most of the work being done by Eric himself. The rest of the tale is an inspiring story of dogged determination to find lasting protection for the land. Suffice it to say that Coyote Lake is, except for one small parcel, now protected, as is its watershed.

Doris and Eric then led us along the lakeside where we saw grebes and several ducks, before coming back through the Memorial Grove. This unique feature was established by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, where in this quiet refuge, individuals may, for a donation, have their ashes spread. The Nature Conservancy then recognizes the individual with a plaque.

After lunch on the deck, Doris led us on the longer (3 Km) Moose Trail away from the lake and through interesting and regenerating parkland vegetation. Being a late and dry spring, there was little in flower or leaf, which allowed a full view of what there was. And what there was, was spectacular! The blue Clematis was climbing everywhere through the woods and if you tired of looking up, you looked down to see the Fairy Bells. On our return to the road near the house, a hatch of dragonflies had appeared since our morning walk. A most enjoyable day, for which we thank our kind hosts.

WAGNER NATURAL AREA SOCIETY RECEIVES AN EMERALD AWARD.

By Beth Jenkins, member of the Wagner Natural Area Society

At the 11th Annual Emerald Awards, on June 12 in Edmonton, the Wagner Natural Area Society received the Community Group Award from the Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence.

Located approximately 20 km west of Edmonton on Highway 16, the Wagner Natural Area covers just over a half-section (130 ha) of land. Often referred to as "the Wagner Bog", the Natural Area is named for the original farmer owner William (Bill) Wagner. The area is known for its 16 species of wild orchids. Calcium-rich springs bubble to the surface to create amber-colored marl ponds. Patterned open sedge fens nestle between hummocks of spruce and tamarack. The diversity of mosses, flowering plants and insect life attract the general public, school and community groups, and research scientists.

In November 1982, representatives of 6 local organizations started the Wagner Natural Area Society. In 1983, it leased the Natural Area from the provincial government. In 1986, it became the Natural Area's official steward under the Alberta government's Volunteer Stewards Program. Since then, the Society has served as a model for many other protected areas throughout Alberta. The Society performs regular monitoring and clean-up operations, and maintains a guided trail system, and has worked hard with others in its efforts to protect and enhance the Natural Area's network of marl ponds, fens and peat lands.

The Wagner Society's recommendation for the Emerald Award was supported by the Orchid Species Preservation Foundation of Alberta, the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, and the Volunteer Stewards program staff. SAPAA was also pleased to provide a letter of support, and we congratulate them on their well-deserved recognition.

VOLUNTEER STEWARD'S CONFERENCE (Dept. of Community Development) – Tentative date – April 26 and 27, 2003 at the Blue Lake Centre (25 km north of Hinton). Mark your calendars.

NEWLETTER ARTICLES

If anyone would like to send me (Alison) notes of recent events, developments, sightings or other news from their Natural Area, we would love to publish them. It doesn't need to be a long article – just a few lines, so that we have a better idea of what is going on round the province.

Don't forget to renew your membership – See you Saturday, October 26th in Red Deer.

Alison Dinwoodie, Temporary Editor
Phone: (780) 437 – 7183
Email: adinwoodie@shaw.ca

STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

(Members only)

Saturday, October 26, 2001

at 9:15 am

Kerry Wood Nature Centre - Discovery Room

6300 - 45 Ave. Red Deer

(see map overleaf)

- 9:15 am Registrations
- 9:30 **A Public Land Specialist's Perspective on OHV Impacts on Natural Areas.**
Speaker: **Wayne Holland**, Public Lands Specialist, Dept of Sustainable Resource Development.
- 9:55 **Legal status of Volunteer Stewards and their Protected Areas.**
Speaker: **Keri Barringer**, Environmental Law Centre.
- 10:20 **OHV users - Can Stewards Work With Them ?**
Speaker: **Calvin Rakach**, President of Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association.
- 10:45 Coffee Break (Coffee etc. provided, but bring your own mug if you can).
- 11:00 **Panel Discussion**
- 12:00 Lunch (Please bring you own bag lunch - there are no facilities on site).
- 1:00 pm **SAPAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - see agenda on reverse
- 2:00 - 3:00 (approx.) Tour of the Kerry Wood Nature Reserve with a local guide.

NOTE: If you want to car-pool to Red Deer, please phone Alison, **780-437-7183**, or e-mail **adinwoodie@shaw.ca**

STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

26 October, 2001 – 1:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Acceptance of Minutes of AGM, 27 Oct. 2001
2. Business arising from the Minutes.
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Liability insurance.
5. Future directions for the Association
6. Election of the Board **

(The Chair and Vice-Chair have both served a 2 year term, and are eligible for a second term. Other members of the Board are elected annually).

Current members are:

Chair - Alison Dinwoodie

Vice Chair - John Woitenko

Treasurer / Membership Secretary - Marilyn Shannon

Recording Secretary - Vacant

Directors - Beth Jenkins

Andy Boyd

Stan Kozyra

** Please come prepared with nominations. Individuals not present at the meeting may be nominated, provided their willingness to stand has been confirmed prior to the meeting.

7. Other Business

