

# Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association

## NEWSLETTER No. 12 April 2005

### **Joyce Gould Workshop, Sunday, May 15, 2005**

Joyce Gould, the biologist with Parks and Protected Areas who gave presentations on **monitoring** at both the Stewards Conference and SAPAA's AGM, has agreed to do a hands on workshop on how to carry out effective monitoring. This workshop will take place at **Wagner Natural Area** on **Sunday, May 15, 2005**. Please meet at the parking lot off Highway 16 at 10:00 a.m. Be prepared to spend approximately three hours in the outdoors.

To get to the Wagner Natural Area from Edmonton, proceed west on Highway 16 to just past the Villeneuve overpass (Highway 44). Access to the parking lot, located on your left, is gained by turning left off Highway 16 onto a service road.

### **Field Trip to Redwater Natural Area Saturday June 18, 2005**

The Friends of Redwater Natural Area have agreed to host a SAPP field trip on Saturday June 18, 2005. Please meet at the north staging area and parking lot at 10:00 a.m. To get to Redwater Natural Area, take the Manning Freeway or highway 21 to Ft. Saskatchewan. Continue east on highway 15 to the junction of highway 830. Turn left and head north on highway 830 to highway 38. Turn left on highway 38, cross the Vinca Bridge and continue west until you see the sign for the Victoria Trail. Turn right onto Victoria Trail and follow the road for approximately two miles to R.R. 205. Turn left onto R.R. 205 and head north approximately three miles to the staging area.

The Redwater Natural Area is a multi-use area that has had a high number of all terrain vehicles utilizing the area. Consequently, the Friends of Redwater Natural Area have led a campaign to educate users on trail etiquette and permissible activities. Gains have been made and the Society will be happy to share these with you. This outing will definitely give you an opportunity to see the challenges Natural Area Stewards face in multi-use area. Be prepared to walk in deep sandy soil and spend approximately five hours in the outdoors.

### **Report on AGM, October 23, 2004**

We were delighted to see so many new faces at the AGM which was held near Edmonton for the first time. This change was in response to last year's questionnaire in which steward's indicated a desire for having the meeting held in different locations. While we were disappointed not to see many of our Red Deer friends, it was invigorating to hear some new ideas and points of view.

The Strathcona Wilderness Centre made an ideal location for a meeting place with the bonus of being situated in a natural setting for our afternoon nature walk. Approximately 20 stewards attended the AGM, which is about the same number of Natural Area Stewards who attended the Parks and Protected Areas conference a month earlier, with the same participants. This observation might suggest that SAPAA's membership is pretty representative of those who take an active interest in the Stewardship Program.

**Joyce Gould**, a biologist with Parks and Protected Areas, our main speaker, gave an informative and practical talk on how to carry out more effective monitoring of our areas. As the government is increasingly relying on Stewards' on-site information, it is important that this observation be done as systematically and scientifically as possible. The value lies in consistent observation or measurements over a period of time. And no, this procedure does not require a science degree, just a bit of careful planning. Some points to consider:

- Try to have a **plan**, if possible, appropriate to time, resources and situation.
- **Note conditions at the same sites and if possible, photograph evidence, as conditions change over time.** This observation could be as simple as measuring the width/depth of eroded trails or noting instances of vandalism, as conditions deteriorate or improve over the years. Photos help! Annual bird or plant surveys or other counts are invaluable. Numerical data is always useful if obtained systematically.
- **Make sure different observers use the same criteria for consistency and preferably, under similar conditions** (season, weather etc.). GPS, map grid references or two landmarks lined up, help to establish identical point observations.
- This systematic reporting really **helps to determine the need or success of management plans or directions**, and carries more weight than casual anecdotes, which are important, but managers like figures!

There were many more useful points, but there is no more room to detail them all. Joyce has very kindly agreed to give a practical field demonstration in the spring.

After coffee break, an open discussion generated a number of comments:

- Improved communication is required within and about SAPAA, e.g. utilize members e-mail addresses, develop a SAPAA website (FAN may help with this task).
- Need for stewards to keep in touch with their neighbors, land managers, municipalities and MLAs. Information theoretically should come to stewards but often information does not come to stewards, so you have to be aware and be persistent! Make sure that the MLA knows about the Natural Areas in his district, what a tremendous resource they are and what they need to survive!
- The Stewards' Manual has been revised, thanks partly to input from SAPAA, although we have not seen the final version. The Vision and Mission Statement was circulated at the September Stewards Conference.
- Concern that Stewards are being marginalized. In the past, they used to work with department staff on management plans, etc. Reclassification of Natural Areas and regulations are underway but bureaucracy is very slow! We need to make sure stewards are consulted.
- Overwhelming response to the need to keep SAPAA alive. The question remains how to attract and contact new members.

### **Insurance and SAPAA Fees**

During the business meeting at the AGM, the possibility of an increase in SAPAA's liability insurance fees was discussed. In this event, our current fee would not

be able to cover such an increase. At this time, exact amounts are uncertain. It was therefore proposed that membership fees would remain the same for 2005, that is \$15.00, of which \$5.00 is now being used to meet insurance costs, but amended to read that in 2006, membership fees would be \$10.00, with the addition of insurance fees (mandatory, but details to be determined).

### **Alberta Stewards Network**

At the recent Volunteers in Motion Conference in Crestomere on March 9, 2005, there was a presentation by the Alberta Stewards Network. This group is a small secretariat which has been set up under the auspices of the Land Stewardship Centre to facilitate communication between different Stewardship groups. There are a number of such groups in the province and they do not always know what is going on in their area. For more information, go to [www.Stewardshipcanada.ca](http://www.Stewardshipcanada.ca), then go to the top bar and click on the Alberta map. For example, there are several watershed groups, so if your Natural Area is located on a particular drainage, to see if there is a local group to contact, you may want to check out the site at [www.albertawatersheds.org](http://www.albertawatersheds.org). Similarly, local natural history groups may have visited your site and could provide fairly detailed and knowledgeable information that would help your understanding and reporting of the biodiversity in your area. The ASN will also be able to provide you with assistance in funding sources, or information on various tools for action.

### **Stewards Reports**

At the risk of sounding repetitive, we remind you again, as mentioned above, that your annual reports are exceedingly important. As there is an on-going review of Natural Areas, you want to make sure that your Natural Area stays on the Government's radar screen. Otherwise, there is a real risk of losing more Natural Areas, and if not lost, re-classified (particularly if they only have a PNT notation, which gives them no legal recognition). With more developments, such as coal-bed methane and recreational impacts, there is always a danger out there. So the more detailed and specific your reports are, the better!

We also suggest that all Stewards check the government web site for their specific site at [www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying\\_alberta/parks/planning/gateway/](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying_alberta/parks/planning/gateway/). Permitted activities are listed but information may not be complete or correct, so you could make suggestions for specific improvements. Bird watching and wildlife viewing are the only nature-oriented activities listed, so you could also list nature study and botanizing or other ecological studies, if appropriate. If specific activities are not permitted, check to see if these are mentioned. Under camping details, if it is a small day use area, this fact could be mentioned, rather than under "camping fees—no fees required" which might encourage more random camping. If your site is still under PNT, it will not be listed, so all the more reason to make sure that it is brought to people's attention.

### **New Poster for SAPAA**

Thanks to Peter Kershaw, SAPAA now has an attractive display poster which was shown at the AGM, the Stewards Conference and the Volunteers in Motion Conference. A hearty "Thank you" Peter, from all stewards for your time and effort in producing this fine work. This effort reminds us all about the need to get more information out to the

public about the Association. It would be great to get more photographs and story boards added. Any talented graphic or display artists out there? We would love to hear from you. Please phone John (780) 459-0475 or Alison (780) 437-7183 if you can assist.

### Stewards Awards

Congratulations to the following individuals and groups who received awards at the September 2004 Stewards Conference in Canmore:

- Patsy Cotterill--Parks and Protected Areas Achievement Award. Patsy has worked tirelessly, particularly in Wagner Natural Area. She has also willingly shared her encyclopedic botanical knowledge with others on many field trips to other Natural Areas.
- Tony Blake—Outstanding Individual Steward. As a relative newcomer to the Stewards Program, Tony has enthusiastically explored several Natural Areas (particularly in the Red Deer region) identifying and adding to our knowledge of many aspects of their natural history.
- Alberta Native Plant Council—Outstanding Stewards Group. With a number of botanists on board, the ANPC has provided invaluable information and support over the years for three particular Protected Areas, Clyde Fen, Big Sagebrush and Cardinal Divide (now Whitehorse Wildland Park).
- Rainbow Equitation Society—Steward Service Excellence. The Society has worked tirelessly to manage and protect three Natural Areas, Halfmoon Lake, Bridge Lake and Opal Natural Area. Vera DeSmet and her son Luke accepted the award on behalf of the Society.

### SAPAA 2005 Annual General Meeting

SAPAA's 2005 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 22 at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer. Suggestions for topics and guest speakers would be greatly appreciated. Please call Alison (780) 437-7183 or John (780) 459-0475 with your suggestions.

### Map to Redwater Natural Area

