

**NEWSLETTER**

**Annual General Meeting Saturday, October 22, 2005**

**Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Red Deer**

This year SAPAA's Annual General Meeting returns to the Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer. As usual we will begin the day with a feature guest speaker who will enlighten and challenge Natural Area Stewards in their volunteer role. We are very fortunate to have **Mr. John Kristensen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Parks and Protected Areas**, as our keynote speaker. The title of Mr. Kristensen's presentation is "Moving the Natural Areas Program into the 21st Century--what it means to Volunteer Stewards". What a tremendous opportunity for stewards to get first hand information as well as to dialogue with the Assistant Deputy Minister!

During our business meeting, we will re-examine SAPAA's mandate and discuss what direction the Association should take in the future.

We want to welcome new stewards who recently joined the Association. To stewards who have not yet joined, we want to encourage you to join! In the short time that the Association has been in existence, the Association has acted on your behalf to ensure that Natural and Protected Areas get the protection they deserve and that they are there for future generations, and that the Volunteer Stewards Program gives clear direction to Stewards to assist in achieving these goals. However, to do this work we need the participation of all stewards, both financially and working on board positions. A reminder to Stewards, your 2006 membership fees are due at the end of October. A membership form is attached to this newsletter.

We hope to see you at the AGM in Red Deer!

**Insurance and SAPP Membership Fees**

During the business meeting of the 2004 AGM, it was proposed that individual or group membership fees for 2006 would remain at \$10.00 with the addition of mandatory insurance fees added. We have been informed that the insurance rate has been increased from \$5.00 to \$7.50 making the total 2006 fee \$17.50.

**SAPAA Board Members Meet With June Markwart, Manager, Recreation and Protected Areas Division**

On Thursday April 14, 2005 three Board Members meet with June Markwart and Sandy Myers to share information and common concerns. The meeting can be summarized as follows:

- June gave each of us a letter from the Minister announcing \$45 million for Parks and Protected Areas in the new budget. Good news for once! She also gave us each some posters and post cards of Alberta's ecological regions, part of a promotion of Parks and Protected Areas.
- Web-site visits have increased to 29,000 last year as public looks for information. Politicians and managers may be getting the message too. Priority to raise Parks and Protected Areas Profile.
- New stewards often apply after word of mouth information. Naturalist groups and field trips help spread the word. Parks and Protected Areas try to match applicant with site and supervisor. SAPAA suggested that experienced stewards could help by mentoring new stewards. Some concern expressed that many stewards (67) have served more than 15 years, but may be retiring or doing less—succession needs to be considered. Expansion of types and roles for stewards. Historic management resources becoming involved e.g. Archaeological sites.
- Question of lease renewals was raised. Six sites have leases up for renewal very soon. These leases are held by Public Lands. Not automatically renewed i.e. If legislation has changed. Natural Areas

recognized as being very important, including PNTs, which are considered when there is a resource application. Some are refused. It would be good to know this information.

- Natural Heritage Act is on the back burner. Amendments to existing legislation were considered. Urgent need for management plans stressed—531 sites, slow going, and few personnel. SAPAA suggested Stewards could assist—might save time and provide correct information! Stewards could also suggest additions, details to area web-sites to provide more useful information e.g. Camping, activities, location. Archie Landals, Brian Kelly involved with long-term land management, June is not part of this group.
- New Stewards Manual was handed out for comments —“a work in progress”. Will be on line soon. Recognized that Volunteer Stewards Program is more than site monitoring. New form is available for special projects to make easier reporting. Tally all hours (door to door), writing, meetings, preparation, etc. and travel expenses e.g. Travel (currently 40 c/km.). On line reports have had some problem (fire-wall blocking?). If Coral doesn't acknowledge receipt, make enquiries. New item in the manual re. Steward safety—use buddy system, notify destination, call on return, use cell phone (mandatory in remote areas?)
- Insurance. Some groups with FAN. Insurance companies don't know how to deal with NPOs. Lobby government, insurance companies for change.
- Timely communications stressed again, especially with Land Managers to Stewards.

### **SAPAA Goes with the Times: Now on the Web** – Hurbert Taube

SAPAA now operates a website: [www.sapaa.fanweb.ca](http://www.sapaa.fanweb.ca)

Admittedly, it is still in the infant stage. Thus far we have posted two items:

1. Objectives of the Association,
2. Brochure of the Association, which includes a membership application form.

The editorial policy of the website will be to be as simple, concise and timely as possible.

Future plans for the website include:

- List of achievements of the Association,
- Publication of the Newsletter updated on a regular basis,
- Announcement of current events that (might) affect Natural Areas,
- Field trip notices and reports, etc., etc.

Contact the webmaster ([taubeha@oanet.com](mailto:taubeha@oanet.com)) if you have any comments on/ or contributions to the website

### **Photomonitoring – A Good Way to Go for Stewards** – Patsy Cotterill

Photography is a quick and relatively non-technical way for stewards to record changes to their sites, says Joyce Gould, senior botanist with the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Center, Parks and Protected Areas. Gould gave a session on monitoring by means of photography September 10 at the annual volunteer stewards conference held this year in Blairmore, Crowsnest Pass.

Monitoring is defined as “repeated observations or measurements over time to assist in management issues.” Gould illustrated some of the management issues that might arise in connection with public use of trails from her work in Baffin Island and at Mt Edith Cavell in Jasper National Park.

There are two main types of photo technique: **photoplots**, photos taken in detail of a small area, for example, a square metre as defined by a quadrant of this size, and **photopoints**, which are pictures of larger areas that may include, for example, a tree stand or a landscape feature.

Gould noted that consistency is the key in monitoring and care must be taken for the photographer to return to the exact same spot and shoot the exact same view with the same equipment, zoom setting, and so on. Duplicating a photopoint on subsequent visits involves such steps as including permanent landmarks in the photo to aid in relocation, and for both types of photo marking the spot with a GPS and on an airphoto or map,

marking the plot permanently if this is feasible, and of course remembering to bring the previous photos back into the field to allow matching up of the exact location and aspect with the original. Adequate note taking is essential, and supplemental photos are often helpful.

Despite the heavy rain (which later turned into the Crowsnest Pass's notorious first snowstorm of the fall!) our group made its way to the nearby Crowsnest Pass Natural Area where Gould and the local steward pointed out possible management features or monitoring targets. Noting that water was pooling along the trail in the downpour, and people were walking along the sides of the trail to avoid it, Gould demonstrated the use of a photoplot to track possible widening of the trail over time. She extended a tape measure across the trail from the vegetation on either side (where a permanent marker could have been located) and placed a quadrant the one edge of the tape (pointing out the need to note which end of the tape you are reading from), together with a label identifying the plot. The camera was mounted on a tripod (note distance of camera from the ground!) and a photo taken of both quadrant and label. In a real situation, the photo would be accompanied by appropriate written documentation. If later monitoring shows that the trail is becoming wider, a suitable management response might be to fill in the hollows and grade the trail.



Monitoring by photography may be simple, but there are still a number of parameters to be recorded and things to be considered if the data collected are to be meaningful and useful. Gould has prepared a booklet containing basic instructions and pointers, websites, her presentation and several articles, which can be obtained from Parks and Protected Areas. Stewards can also watch for announcements of further field demonstrations, such as the one held in Wagner Natural Area on May 16, this year.

*Shown on left: Joyce Gould demonstrating the taking of photopoints at Wagner Natural Area, May 16, 2005.*

## **PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS 2005 VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE – Jim Pratt**

Conference was held on Sept. 9, 10 and 11 at the Crowsnest Center in Blairmore Alberta. Did not seem to be as well attended as the previous conventions. The accommodations and meals were very good. It was a perfect area for a volunteer conference. There were trails and lakes and of course the mountain scenery, which is always a pleasure to see.

The trail tours offered were very interesting and educational. The sessions offered some very valuable information to the Stewards.

The session on Current Challenges in Land Management and Heritage Protection with Brian Kelly as guest speaker was of particular interest to many stewards and was well attended. Many questions were fielded by Mr. Kelly but not to the satisfaction of some stewards.

Some of the highlights of his presentation were as follows.

- Change of Legislation Act in reclassification of Candidate Natural Areas.

- Change in the Act to hopefully improve conditions and laws for the protection of Natural Areas.  
May combine PNTs with parks.  
Some priorities for change would probably be for:
  1. Land base Parks
  2. Range Lands
  3. No plans for smaller areas for 2 to 3 years. Opportunities for new protected areas will be limited.

Questions from Stewards:

Question on Coal Bed Methane.

Ans. Will not allow access same as natural gas.

Question on allocation of public land in the future.

Ans. Don't know at this time..

Question how could we get information of priority list for Natural Areas.

Ans. Will be coming up in management sites.

Question what about OHVs in Natural Areas

Ans. OHV use is fast becoming a new form of Recreation and needs to be monitored. Small portion of the general public considers protected areas are a waste of space.

John Kristensen Assistant Deputy Minister Parks and Protected Areas presented convention awards to Volunteer Stewards. A special and well-deserved award was presented to Sandra Myers for her years of good work and dedication. Sandra's award was well appreciated by the Stewards present at the banquet.

The Convention ended in a strange way. Sid Marty, poet, singer and a great entertainer, was in the middle of his closing song when the power went off in the banquet room. Sid finished his song, with the assistance of a flashlight, like the trooper he is.

A heavy snowfall caused a power outage and concluded the rest of the conference.

# SAPAA GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, October 22, 2005

At 9:15 am

Kerry Wood Nature Centre

6300 - 45 Ave. Red Deer

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and coffee
- 9:30 **Mr. John Kristensen**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Parks and Protected Areas  
"Moving the Natural Areas Program into the 21st Century--what it means to Volunteer Stewards"
- 10:30 Coffee Break (Coffee etc. provided, but bring your own mug if you can)
- 10:45 Questions and discussion
- 11:15 **SAPAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - see agenda on reverse
- 12:00 Lunch (Please bring you own bag lunch - there are no facilities on site)
- 12:45 Current Issues and Challenges Facing Natural Area Stewards
- 1:45 Questions and discussion
- 2:15 Coffee break
- 2:30 Kerry Wood Nature Centre Trail Experience
- 3:30 Leave site

# STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting

October 22, 2005 – 11:15 a.m.

### AGENDA

1. Acceptance of minutes of AGM, October 23, 2004.
2. Business arising from minutes
3. Treasurer's report
4. Liability insurance
5. Membership fees
6. Future directions of the Association
7. Election of the Board\*

Current members are:

Chair- John Woitenko

Vice chair- Peter Kershaw

Treasurer/membership- Marilyn Shannon

Recording secretary- Alison Dinwoodie

Directors- Jim Pratt, Hubert Taube

*\*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.*

8. Other business.