

Site Name:	Coyote Lake
Site Type:	Natural Area
Status:	Order-in-council (OC)
Subtype:	Conservation
PASite ID (Map Ref #):	275
O.C. No. (Land Ref. Manual):	584/92
Site # (Parks Website):	439
Reserved Area:	0.00 ha. (0.00 ac.)
Designated Area:	321.59 ha. (794.64 ac.)
Total Area:	1253.31 ha. (3096.93 ac.)
Additional Protected Areas:	see PNT area
Lat/Long Co-ordinates:	53.2542402782 N, -114.536601016 W
Natural Region:	Boreal
Natural Subregion(s):	Central Mixedwood; Dry Mixedwood
2nd Natural Region:	
2nd Natural Subregion(s):	
IUCN Classification:	II
Operated By:	Parks Division
Info Phone:	403-340-7691
Steward(s) Aug2002:	Volunteer(s) 2
Steward(s) Aug2003:	Volunteer(s) 3
Steward(s) Dec2011:	yes
Petroleum & Natural Gas Surface Access Aug2002:	Conditional
Day Use Site(s):	Coyote Lake
Recreation Activities:	birding; wildlife viewing

Access:

Notes: This area has rolling topography with numerous wetland depressions. Tamarack-black spruce-sphagnum peatland, willow-birch shrubland, sedge meadows & small sloughs are common. A rare species of ducksmeal (*Wolffia*) is found here. The upland vegetation consists of aspen & balsam poplar forests, with some areas of white spruce.

Important breeding bird habitat provides excellent opportunities for bird watching. The site contains features of the Boreal Forest, Parkland and Rocky Mountain natural regions, so there is a wide variety of bird species. Coyote Lake itself provides important feeding habitat for great blue herons and nesting habitat for red-necked grebe, common loon and ring-necked duck. It is also a significant resting site for numerous migrating waterfowl. Mammals include deer, elk, moose, coyote, black bear and beaver.

This site lies in the Boreal Forest Natural Region, Dry Mixedwood Sub-region. The Dry Mixedwood Sub-region is the only Boreal Forest sub-region that does not have excellent representation within Alberta's parks and protected areas network. There are still significant

shortfalls in the glacial lakebed, ground moraine, sandplain and sand dune natural history themes. Listed in "Other Natural Areas" (Alberta Parks web site, 2012).

Coyote Lake is approximately 80 km west of Edmonton, or 130 km from Red Deer. Doris and Eric Hopkins are well known to most Stewards, as they have done more to promote the idea of Natural Areas and in particular, conservation easements to protect their area, than most people.

Coyote Lake is a great area as it is in the transition zone between aspen parkland, boreal forest, and even foothills, so there should be lots to see for everyone, including orchids and one or two rare species - always supposing spring comes when it should! Greater Coyote Lake Conservation Area started when the Hopkins donated their land to the Nature Conservancy, and they have since persuaded some of their neighbours to do likewise. The government has also earmarked additional land round the lake as Natural Areas, but as Doris says, if we can get more people to realise how special this area is, the better chance we have of maintaining, and even expanding it.

Directions from Edmonton: Take Hwy 39 west from Leduc, then straight on to Hwy 622 past Telfordville to St. Francis; keep straight on (Twp Rd. 500) another 8 m (approx) then turn S. on Range Rd 44, to Coyote Lake - there are signs at the turn off.

Directions from Red Deer: Take Hwy 20 north from Bentley to Alsike, go approx. 2 km W. on Hwy 39, turn N. on Range Rd. 43 (Saskatoon Valley Rd) to Twp Rd. 500, go W. 1 km, then turn S. on Rge Rd 44, to Coyote Lake. (SAPAA Newsletter Mar 2002)

Coyote Lake Nature Sanctuary Field Trip

Saturday, June 8, 2002.

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.

John Woitenko and Pat Clayton (SAPAA Newsletter June 2002)



Those of us to whom Eric and Doris Hopkins were familiar faces for so many years miss their regular attendance at various stewards' meetings, and of course at the Sanctuary itself, where they maintained a residence and led tours. At the same time we remember them through their legacy of protected land, in which we can witness the constant renewal of life.

In the fall of 2007 the Alberta Region of the Nature Conservancy of Canada presented their inaugural Eric and Doris Hopkins Stewardship Excellence Award to Eric and Doris Hopkins. This honour was bestowed in recognition of their 35 years' conservation and stewardship work on behalf of the Coyote Lake Nature Sanctuary. The area to date comprises 1,651 ha of Natural Area protected by the Province of Alberta and 538 ha protected by the NCC, the latter largely due to the efforts of Eric and Doris and their original donation of land.

Eric died in November 2006 aged 96, and Doris very recently moved away from the Coyote Lake area to be with her family in Edmonton. Stewardship of the Sanctuary continues, however, and it remains open to the public under the administration of the NCC. Recently the Alberta Region of the NCC also established the Eric Hopkins Memorial Fund to help realize the Hopkins' additional dream of conserving the lands along Coyote Creek to the North Saskatchewan River. From information in the NCC's magazine, "The Ark", Spring 2007.

Images:





