

Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association (SAPAA)

NEWSLETTER NO. 25, SEPTEMBER 2011

Calling All Volunteer Stewards!

An important meeting for SAPAA is coming up at the Kerry Wood Centre in Red Deer on 22 Oct. 2011.

Several of the present Board have been active since the early days of the Association but will not be available in the near future. In particular, we are looking for a new President and Secretary. Unless more Stewards are willing to join us and help to continue this work, we may have to entertain the following motion at the upcoming AGM to dissolve the Association.

'Be it resolved that unless SAPAA can appoint a full Board of Directors at the AGM on 22 Oct. 2011, SAPAA will be dissolved, effective immediately.'

If you are concerned about the future of your particular Protected Area, or the Parks system in general, please consider coming to SAPAA'S AGM in October. Or if you can't come, please contact us through our website <http://sapaastewards.com/>, or at red20@telus.net or adinwoodie@shaw.ca. We need your help to increase our active membership so that SAPAA can remain viable and become a stronger and more effective organization.

Please come and give us your support! We look forward to hearing from you.



Founding member, Alison Dinwoodie, has been a driving force in SAPAA since Day One – photo by E. Beaubien

SAPAA Then and Now

SAPAA came into existence in the late 90s, when the provincial Parks department was undergoing severe budget and staff cuts. It had been suggested that a provincial organization of Parks Volunteer Stewards could provide a representative voice for Stewards to

help them work more effectively with Parks and Protected Areas.

Over the years, SAPAA has met with various Ministers, Parks planners and other local and regional land managers, to help to promote Alberta Parks' mandate for conservation and education and to support the Volunteer Stewards Program. SAPAA has held annual meetings with very informative speakers and has also distributed informative newsletters focusing on current conservation issues, specific Protected Areas in Alberta and helpful tips for Stewards. If you'd like to find out more about SAPAA activities and read our newsletters, check out our website at www.sapaastewards.com.

There is still a real need for a Stewards Association, particularly with all the current pressures on Parks and Protected Areas, recent changes in legislative vision and future changes in management and land classification.

Field Trip to Clyde Fen

On July 4th and July 23rd, 2011, the Clyde Fen Natural Area was visited by volunteers from SAPAA and Adopt-a-Plant Alberta (APA). APA was established in 2005 to address the need for ongoing data collection on Alberta's rare species. The Clyde Fen field trips proved successful, as two species of rare orchids were found.

Clyde Fen is a unique wetland system that is important for regional biodiversity, groundwater recharge and discharge, wildlife habitat, and educational opportunities. Despite recent disturbances (a wildfire in 2001; a gravel road through the wetland in 2010), the Clyde Fen Natural Area remains one of the most unique and ecologically significant peatlands within an hour drive of Edmonton.



View over Clyde Fen from the recent gravel road

The Clyde Fen Natural Area is home to several orchid species, a host of other wildflowers, and many species of grasses, sedges, and rushes. One could spend an entire summer studying the diverse flora and not become bored. Great success awaited us this summer, with the discovery of bog adder's-mouth (*Malaxis paludosa*) on July 4th and Loesel's twayblade (*Liparis loeselli*) July 23rd.

Bog adder's-mouth was found in two locations, each a single plant on a hummock in a stand of regenerating black spruce. This is the 4th time this plant had been identified in the Clyde Fen. Unfortunately, the first 3 plants probably no longer exist; the first 2 disappeared with the fire in 2001 and the 3rd with clearing for the road in 2010. Loesel's twayblade was found for the 1st time 3 years ago. A group of 6 plants was discovered in an area dominated by sedges and forbs with scattered clusters or swamp birch and hoary willow.



Tiny (2 mm) flowers of bog adder's-mouth



Pale yellow seed capsules of Loesel's twayblade

The fen was saturated to the surface during the July 4th visit, and had several centimeters of standing water during the July 23rd visit. Pitcher plants were found throughout the fen, 1 of 6 carnivorous plant species known from this site. Despite natural and man-made disturbances, this year was good news for Clyde Fen, good news for Alberta's biodiversity, and Clyde Fen remains a wetland worth visiting.

Article & photos by Kristen Andersen

Field Trip to Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park

The trip began on an inauspicious note. Alison Dinwoodie, steward of Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park, arrived early (July 8th) and spent the entire day at Cadomin Motel watching horizontal rain blast through the valley. Fortunately, July 9th, while not very bright, was at least dry, and the group had a very successful day surveying the alpine flora on the East Ridge. Kristen Andersen had organized a group of 7 expert and non-expert botanists, so as usual, the party quickly spread over the hillside, depending who was identifying what.



Sweet-flowered androsace (*Androsace chamaejasme*) was one of many beautiful wildflowers – Photo by K. Andersen

Spring was very late and the summer was very wet, but we still found a good variety of flowers. Surveyors were delighted to discover the rare alpine harebell (*Campanula uniflora*). A short while later, we thought we had found another rare plant, alpine saxifrage (*Saxifraga nivalis*), but even the experts couldn't agree on its identity. Many plants were scattered over the slope, and the final consensus was that this was the more common rhomboid-leaved saxifrage (*Saxifraga occidentalis*).

There are many unusual alpine plants in this area, so everyone enjoyed finding new species. Species diversity is one of the main reasons that the area was originally suggested as an Ecological Reserve, later designated a Natural Area, and eventually became part of the much larger Whitehorse Wildland Park.

During a short walk from the Whitehorse Creek campsite on July 10th, we found yet another rare species, Arctic wintergreen (*Pyrola grandiflora*). It was growing near the edge of a bluff that the coal mine bulldozers had been eating away for haul road fill. So yes, we do still need Protected Areas!

Article by Alison Dinwoodie



Arctic wintergreen appears to have increased in recent years
Photo by Patsy Cotterill



Discovery of tiny alpine harebell was a pleasant surprise
Photo by Ted Campbell

STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, October 22, 2011

at 9:30 A.M.

Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Red Deer, Alberta

PROGRAM

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and coffee
- 9:30 a.m. Speaker: **Terry N. Krause**
Park Planner, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Title: **Current Plans for Parks & Protected Areas in the Red Deer Region**
Terry will present an update on the status of the new Parks Act and how the new Land Use Framework is playing out in Central Alberta. He will also discuss the status and context of the Dry Island Tourism Plan and the Rumsey Plan. Finally, he will address the role of stewards today and in the future.
- 10:15 a.m. Questions and discussion
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break (coffee, etc. provided but bring your own mug if you can)
- 11:00 a.m. Speaker: **Colleen McPhee**
Conservation Coordinator, Central/Northern Alberta, Nature Conservancy of Canada
Title: **Nature Conservancy Activities in the Red Deer Region**
Colleen will discuss the status and importance of Nature Conservancy holdings and activities in and around Red Deer, along with plans for the future.
- 11:45 a.m. Questions and discussion
- 12:00 noon **Lunch** (Please bring your own lunch, as kitchen facilities are limited)
- 12:30 p.m. **SAPAA Annual General Meeting** (see agenda on reverse)
- 2:00 p.m. **Walk in the Park** – Enjoy some fresh air and exercise before heading home. Join us for a walk around the beautiful trails in the Gaetz Lake Sanctuary



**STEWARDS OF ALBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Saturday, 24 October 2011, 12:30 p.m.
AGENDA**

1. Acceptance of Minutes of previous AGM, 23 October 2010
2. Business arising from the minutes
3. Treasurer's report
4. SAPAA web page status
5. Election of the Board

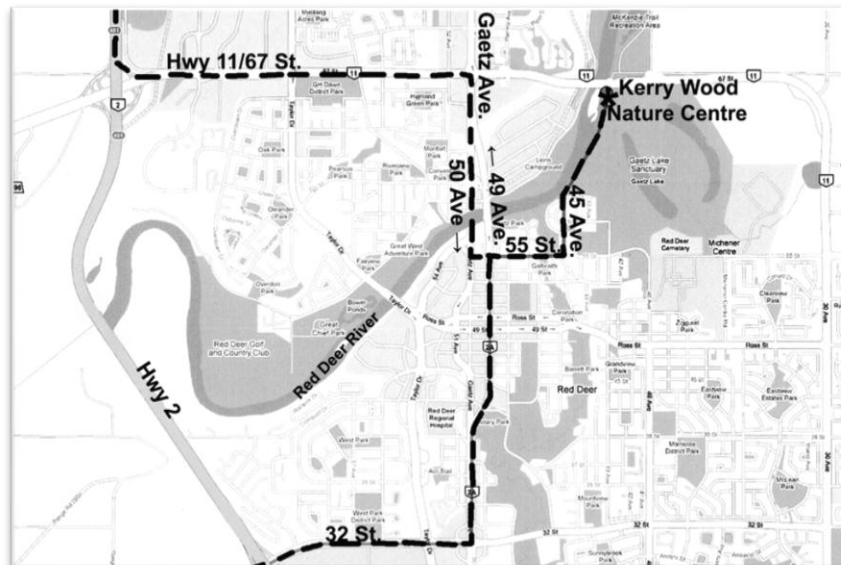
Current members are:

President – Peter Kershaw
 Vice President – Hubert Taube
 Treasurer / Membership Secretary – Linda Kershaw
 Recording Secretary – Alison Dinwoodie
 Directors – John Woitenko (FAN Representative)
 Richard deSmet
 Tony Blake

Newsletter Editors – Patsy Cotterill, Linda Kershaw

Please come prepared with nominations. Members not present at the meeting may be nominated, provided their willingness to stand has been confirmed prior to the meeting. The President and Vice-President have served 2 years of their third 2-year terms. Other members of the Board are elected annually.

6. Discussion of the future of SAPAA - 'Be it resolved that unless SAPAA can appoint a full Board of Directors at the AGM on 22 Oct. 2011, SAPAA will be dissolved, effective immediately.'
7. Other business



DIRECTIONS: To reach the Kerry Wood Nature Centre from **Highway 2**, take the **67 St.** exit in Red Deer and then turn **right (south) onto Gaetz Ave. (50 Ave.)**. Turn **left (east) on 55 St.**, then **left (north) on 45 Ave.** Follow this until you see the Kerry Wood Nature Centre on your right.
OR, Take the **32 Street** exit and then turn **left (north) on Gaetz Ave.** Go north, through the one-way system, and turn **right (east) onto 55 Street.** Turn **left (north) onto 45 Ave.** and proceed to the Nature Centre as before.