

**Pictures from ANPC Botany Alberta 2016 in Holmes Crossing Sandhills Ecological Reserve, Fort Assiniboine Sandhills Wildland Provincial Park, and Clyde Fen Candidate Natural Area, Alberta**

**June 24-26, 2016**

Photos courtesy of:

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HolmesCrossing1-WD



HolmesCrossing2\_WD



HolmesCrossing3\_WD



FASPP1\_KA



FASPP2\_KA



FASPP3\_ID



FASPP4\_KA



FASPP5\_ID



FASPP6\_ID



FASPP7\_ID



FASPP8\_ID



FASPP9\_ID



CF1\_KA



CF2\_KA



CF3-KA

**Botany Alberta 2016** took place in the central mixed wood and dry mixed wood boreal forest areas about a 2 hour drive northeast of our capital city, Edmonton.

**Friday** afternoon, the group met at Holmes Crossing just this side of the Athabasca River Bridge from Fort Assiniboine. This place is home to traverse dunes stabilized by the jack pine lichen forest, including a series of small lakes. We climbed up a bit of a hill to an area where there were large areas of wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) between the alders and spruce. The bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) was in full bloom and the blueberries were profuse but not yet mature. At another point, the group treaded down into a low lying area filled with birch, willow, pine and spruce. The *Parnassia* was just in bud but the *Pyrola asarifolia* was in full bloom, poking its pink flowers up through the shrubs and grasses. Another turn took us into a large wetland full of *Carex utriculata*.

**Saturday's** trip included the Fort Assiniboine Sandhills Wildland Provincial Park, which is along the North Shore of the Athabasca River. The group started out at Central Staging area, where the Moose Trail carried us into a majestic stand of jackpine with the forest floor covered by *Cladonia* lichens. *Pinus banksiana*, *Picea mariana*, *Picea glauca*, *Alnus viridis*, *Populus tremuloides*, and *Vaccinium myrtilloides* were common here, as well as a smattering of grasses and forbs including *Arabidopsis lyrata* and *Carex siccata*. As the group winded up the trail, we found a hill top perfect for a picnic, with a beautiful view surrounded by wood lilies in full bloom. After lunch, a patch of low milkweed (*Asclepias ovalifolia*) grabbed our attention. After many photos and a specimen collection, we started down a slope where wetter habitats including fens were observed. Around each corner, the species diversity of the Fort Assiniboine Sandhills became more evident. With over 435 species recorded in the park, it was no surprise to continue discovering more species including spotted coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*), green saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium tetandrum*), blunt leaved sandwort (*Moehringia lateriflora*), yellow

avens (*Geum aleppicum*), and golden sedge (*Carex aurea*) to name a few. Thanks to the efforts of the group, a specimen collection including 62 species was made for accession at the herbarium to create an irreplaceable record and resource for education, research and knowledge of the Alberta flora.

**On Sunday** morning, the group met at the Clyde Fen. The candidate natural area was established in 1990 and the ANPC has been a steward of the site since 1992. Clyde Fen is home the southern-most population of pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*), one of 7 insectivorous plants found here, and were a common sight as the group meandered through the fen. One thing that everyone would likely agree upon, is that the Clyde Fen is certainly a wetland worth visiting, and to continue watching over it given the unique and important habitat.