

NATURE REGINA 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Vice President's Report

This year has been one of maintaining the existing BSI initiative, expanding the program, while working as a collective to fill the President's chair in the organization.

I would like to offer a special thank you to all the board members for collectively acting as president – Elaine Ehman, Jade Fisher, Margaret Skeel, Jim Elliott, Shirley Bartz, Dale Hjertaas, Kirsten Palmier, Linda Langenbacher, Ingrid Thiessen, and Elizabeth Verrall. Our webmaster Emily Haidl and our social media coordinator Thomas Haidl are appreciated for their excellent contributions to Nature Regina. These contributions were integral to making the last year the success it was. We will miss Shirley Bartz and her expertise but understand her time commitments simply didn't allow for her to continue on with the board. We hope to see her again as board member sometime down the road. Dale Hjertaas will also be missed as a board member but thankfully we haven't lost him entirely as he will continue to be our Hidden Valley coordinator.

I would like it also noted that Nature Regina has continued a recent journey as individuals and as an organization to understand and embrace the spirit behind Truth and Reconciliation. We recognize the importance of Truth and Reconciliation and hope to explore and welcome the rich and diverse cultures, voices, experiences and stories of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

To reiterate what has already been stated in past reports but is worth repeating again, I would like to thank all of our program volunteers including, but not limited to, those who work in the native plant garden, Hidden Valley volunteers, senior field trip leaders and bird count leaders, volunteers for both the Get Outside! programming and Urban wildlife project, membership coordinators, phoning, mailing

and social organizers. Finally, a thank you to all of you who continue to make Nature Regina the diverse, ever changing and growing community it has become and continues to be. Nature Regina wouldn't be what it is without your continued love and support. Together we are making a positive difference in our community and ourselves.

Submitted by,
Jeff Gamble

Speakers 2022/2023 Season

This year, I organized the speakers. We had the following folks present over the course of the 2022-2023 season. The talks were hosted as a hybrid meeting version where attendance was on site (Royal Saskatchewan Museum), and online through Zoom or the website. Videos have been posted on our YouTube Channel and the links can be found on our website (Thanks Emily!):

| Name | Affiliated Organization | Content of talk |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Caelan Libkey | University of Regina/RSM | Fossils and amber from Saskatchewan |
| Erin Swerdfeger | Ministry of Environment | Species at-risk in SK and the CDC |
| Lorne Scott | | Conservation challenges and successes over the years |
| Members Photo Night | | Members showcase their nature photos |
| Arzu Sardarli | First Nations University | Community based research and educational projects with FN communities |
| Dana Green | University of Regina | Community ecology of North American bats |
| Into the weeds Film | | A portrait of Dewayne Johnson, a Bay Area groundskeeper who suffered from deteriorating health possibly caused by herbicide. |
| Kelsey Bell | University of Regina | Grassland songbird land use and how the proportion of non-native grasses might affect their territory persistence in and around Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area |
| Dave Jonathan | YQR Naturalist | Growing native plants in the garden: a foragers perspective |
| Ryan Oram | RSM | Pollinators in Saskatchewan |

Wayne Pepper has been contacted, hoping we can work something out for the next season.

Respectfully submitted,
Kirsten Palmier

City Nature Challenge 2023

Nature Regina has participated for the third time in the City Nature Challenge. Started in 2016 as a competition between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the City Nature Challenge (CNC) has grown into an international event, motivating people around the world to find and document wildlife in their cities. Run by the Community Science teams at the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the CNC is an annual four-day global bioblitz at the end of April, where cities are in a collaboration-meets-friendly-competition to see not only what can be accomplished when we all work toward a common goal, but also which city can gather the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the event. This year, Nature Regina teamed up with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Friends of Wascana Marsh, and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. Shannon Chernick and I co-lead the CNC this year. The committee met 4 times throughout the planning process, and Shannon Chernick attended mandatory meetings with the lead organizers in LA. We advertised through social media (Facebook/Instagram), posters, a radio interview with CBC and two TV interviews with Global TV Regina.

Video links:

<https://fb.watch/k8TuB6V3zm/>

<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalReginaNews/videos/city-nature-challenge/1608919479533590/>

The event ran from April 28th through to May 1st. We had a total of 958 observations, 192 species, and 50 observers. The top taxa observed were White-tailed jack rabbits, Canada goose, Mallards, Common Grackles and a tie between American Robins and Red-winged black birds.

Total volunteer hours for this year: ~120 hours (~2 hrs. per week + Meetings).

Respectfully submitted,
Kirsten Palmier

Events/Field Trips

I took on the Field Trip Coordinator position at the end of September 2022 and we offered our first field trip on Sunday, October 2. The trip was in Wascana Park, walking around the Legislative Building and was well attended with 25 participants! We have received positive feedback from many people who have attended various field trips this year. People certainly appreciate the opportunity to get outside to experience nature with a group of like-minded folks.

From October 2022 to April 2023, 21 field trips were organized, although 3 were cancelled due to poor weather and road conditions. A total of 213 people attended the 18 field trips, with attendance varying from 2 people (a field trip that was not cancelled but was during a blizzard!) to 33 at Hidden Valley. It has been wonderful to see long-time members attending the field trips, but also many new people have joined the trips too!

We travelled to Regina Beach, Round Lake, Fort Qu’Appelle, Hidden Valley, Wakamow Valley and numerous locations in Regina including the Mckell Conservation Area, Whitmore Park, Wascana Park, and AE Wilson Park.



Birding at Round Lake on October 29, 2022

Our field trips are led entirely by volunteers and we have an amazing group of skilled volunteers. This includes Sarah Ludlow, Dave Drummond, Brett Quiring, Dan Sawatzky, Dale Hjertaas, Don Weidl and Ryan Fisher. Additionally, Jim Elliot covers getting the field trip schedule emailed out to members, Emily Haidl posts the field trips onto the Nature Regina website calendar and Thomas Haidl posts our field trips on Facebook. I am so grateful to this group of people for helping make Nature Regina field trips possible.

I’m looking forward to more Nature Regina field trips to come in 2023-2024! We’ve already been out to Hidden Valley and Chaplin Lake! I hope you will join us on a field trip this year!

Submitted by,
Jared Clarke



Watching gulls on the Point at Regina Beach

October 8, 2022



Birding in Wascana Park, October 2, 2022

Membership

I am presenting this report of Memberships for the AGM 2023. In this report, I will in Table One show the number of memberships in the categories of: Complimentary, Family, Honorary, Senior, and Single, as well as new memberships, since May of 2022.

Hello, members of Nature Regina. My name is Robert Antonowitsch, and I took over membership duties from Dale Hjertaas for Nature Regina in May of 2022. Since then, I have been learning and I am continuing to learn, the Database that compiles information received from the treasurer. I look after entry of membership renewals and new memberships, as well as other duties, into a database called Access to track the number of members in the membership categories noted above.

There was a total of 233 members in 2022-23. A Family membership is comprised of two members.

Table One: Memberships and New Memberships in 2022-2023

| Membership Category | Memberships | Members | New Memberships |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Complimentary | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Family | 59 | 118 | 5 |
| Honorary | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Senior | 43 | 43 | 5 |
| Single | 66 | 66 | 17 |
| Total | 174 | 233 | 27 |

Submitted by,
Robert Antonowitsch

Nature Regina Seniors Group

Seniors Group – Roberta Cox and Dale Hjertaas, Coordinators

The seniors group operated successfully through the summer and fall, then halted for the winter. It reactivated in May and is currently meeting every Wednesday. The group has grown a little this spring and now has 23 members. All group members take turns leading outings which happen in or around the city and last from a couple of hours to 5 or 6 hours. We try to include some social time in the outings.

Volunteer hours of coordinators – 10

Submitted by,
Dale Hjertaas

Webmaster

WIX WEBSITE YEARLY REVIEW

NEW & NOTEWORTHY:

We've added a lot of new content to the website including all of the 90th anniversary material and 2023 Calendar. We also have a new 'Happening in the Community' page to advertise nature and conservation work in the community. Following suggestions from board members, we've made updates or changes to the following pages this year:

- Home page
 - Add donate button
 - Fix email list subscription
 - Many changes to home page ribbon
- Conservation Grant
 - Misc edits
 - Changed submission form and contact information
- Hidden Valley
 - Various edits
 - Update to media display
- Donate page
 - Misc edits
- About Us
 - Various Edits
- Photo Contest
- History
- Others

Additionally, significant effort went in to optimizing website pages for mobile viewing. Improvements have been made but there is still quite a way to go.

SITE MAINTENANCE:

- Site maintenance tends to fall around the beginning of each season:
 - Fall – late August/early Sept
 - Late Fall – November
 - Winter – late December/early January
 - Spring – assuming late Feb/early March
- When submissions to the website for multiple programs fall all at the same time it creates a large time commitment in a short period, and then large stretches of almost no time commitment.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR:

We missed entering a couple Spring field trips due to late submission. I'm hoping to increase my availability to post things last minute and hoping to receive submissions further ahead of time.

We don't have any material for the Bird Counts (just Christmas) – I'd like to create a page for these and would like to include some images from the initiative.

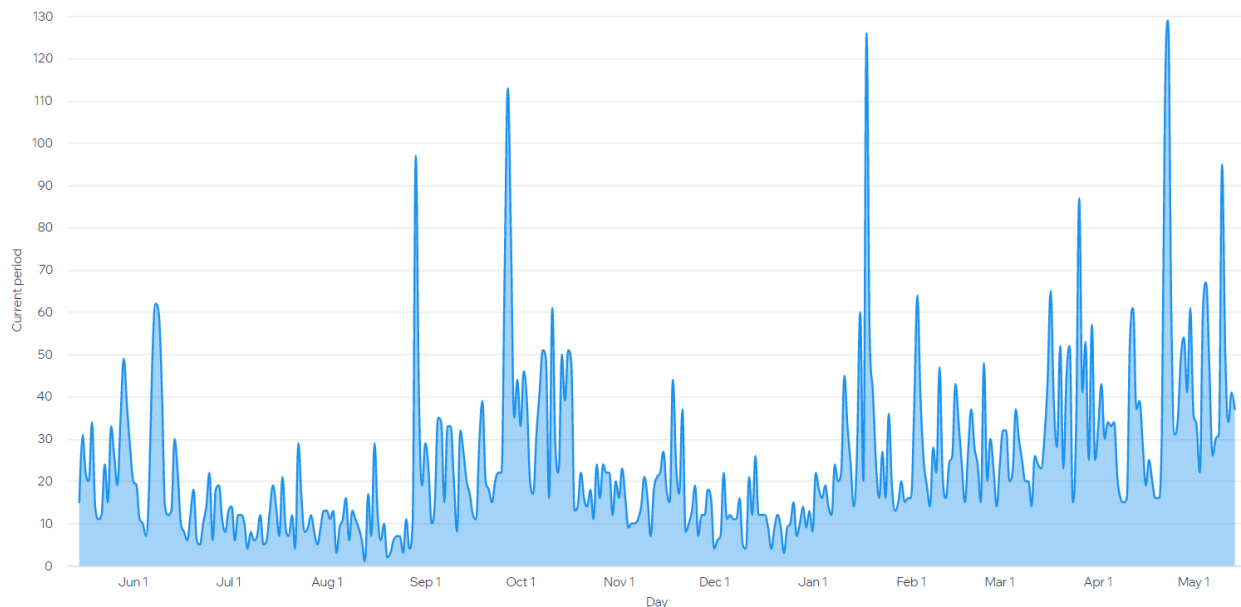
We missed creating a page for the City Nature Challenge this year. It could be valuable to include a page on our site for the CNC.

ANALYTICS:

Note: all analytics pulled directly from the Wix Analytics & Reports section May 14th, 2023. Reporting period is May 15th, 2022– May 14th, 2023 and any comparisons are to the previous year (May 15th, 2021– May 14th, 2022).

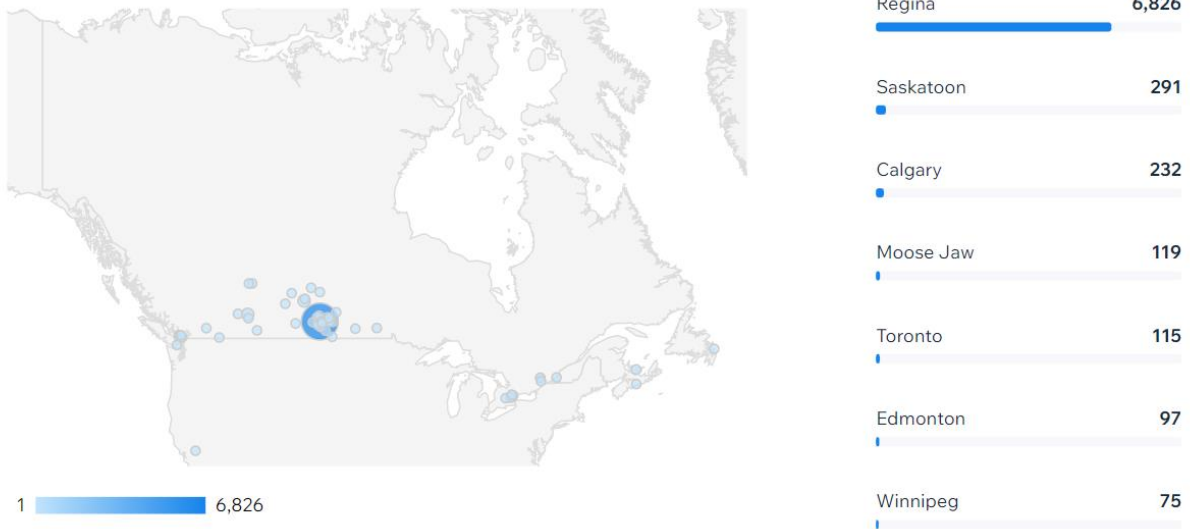
SITE ACTIVITY:

- In the last year, we've had 8,853 site visitors, which is a 79% increase over the previous year.
 - This activity included 5,250 unique visitors, which is an increase of 48% from the previous year.
 - The average session duration accessing our website was down 5% from the previous year. Users spent on average 4 minutes and 11 seconds interacting with our website this year.
- We saw significant spikes in activity in the spring, early fall, and late fall. Summer seems to be our lowest traffic period. A very high spike in site traffic seems to have occurred April 29th, 2023 which may correspond to a very well-designed social media post for a field trip around that time.



- Majority of our users (61%) access our website via mobile. Most of our users got to our website via google search, directly typing in the url, or from Facebook. Additionally, users got to our site via referrals from other websites including:
 - Social media link trees
 - Naturesask.ca
 - DuckDuckGo
 - Many others
- Our most popular page continues to be our events calendar.

- Majority of our users are from Regina, but we have had a few visits from throughout the country.



Event Registration:

- In the past year, 1130 people have RSVP'd to our events (note that field trips do not require registration). 910 of those people were registered for Get Outside! Programs. This does not include waitlists.
 - Our most attended event was the Get Outside! Kids club 2023/03/17 with 115 registrants.

Volunteer hours average about 78 hours per year.

Submitted by Webmaster,

Emily Haidl

Social Media Report

Nature Regina has two forms of social media: Instagram and Facebook. The primary goal of these pages is to spur engagement with our community and to advertise our organization’s events. To measure how well we engage and advertise year-to-year, we can use social media analytics. In the past year period to date (May 14th, 2022 – May 14th, 2023), we have not done any paid advertising. This has resulted in a decrease in reach (the number of people who see our posts) by 71% on Facebook. However, when we control for the reach resulting from paid advertisement, we find that our organic reach (number of people reached without advertising) has actually increased by 12% this year. Organic reach results in more audience engagement, as it is resulting from post sharing and interest within our community, rather than forced advertisements. The impact of organic reach is evidenced by our page visits, which on Facebook have increased by nearly 40% this year compared to last. Nature Regina should continue to prioritize growth via organic reach, sharing posts with other community pages etc., rather than by paid advertisement. Instagram has seen a decrease in page reach of 24%, which correlates highly with a decrease in page visits of 23.4%. Increased posting frequency, and posts which are not strictly event posters both seem to increase Instagram engagement, and may aid in increasing this account’s reach.

To highlight successes, the best performing post on Facebook this year was “Registration for the Spring Sessions of the Get Outside! Preschool Club...”, reaching 6,299 people, which was shared by 25 people, and generated 54 link clicks. The second best was the Wascana Migratory Bird Sanctuary Kids Club Registration announcement, these registration announcements start up quite the buzz! The third most popular was a Nature Regina Spring Field Trips promo, garnering the most link clicks of any post at 100! Looking forward, we hope to improve our pages growth, and perhaps venture into new forms of media, like short-form content or reels, which dominate social media platforms.



The top three performing posts on Nature Regina’s Facebook account in the period of May 14th, 2022 to May 14th, 2023.

My volunteer hours average about 52 hours per year.

Submitted by,

Thomas Haidl

Christmas Bird Count

Nature Regina hosted its usual three Christmas Birds Counts again this year. After two years of the survey being adapted for the pandemic, we mostly returned to the pre-2020 setup and hosted lunch get togethers for the participants

| Count | Species found | Participants |
|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Regina | 33 | 44 |
| Craven | 25 | 28 |
| Balgonie | 26 | 14 |

The participant and species seen were about normal compared to the last 10 years. Some notable birds seen were a provincially rare Red-bellied Woodpecker in Regina, a first for Pileated Woodpecker on the Craven count and an unusually late Song Sparrow. However, the most interesting decline of Ravens in all three counts. Raven numbers were down about 50% compared to recent years. It will be interesting to see the provincial numbers to see if this was regional blip or if the population has been hit hard by the Avian flu that hit earlier this year.

Brett Quiring

Newsletter/MailChimp Manager

Since we began to use MailChimp for our Newsletter, the newsletter has continued to be published for our members every two months: January, March, May, July, September and November. For those that wish to have a printed copy, we have printed and mailed a copy to them with the same material. MailChimp has also been used to provide intermittent announcements that do not fit well with the newsletter timing and/or need to be sent out quickly to fit with the announcement or event. More recently, we will be sending out monthly field trip notices.

After the regular newsletter, we have also initiated a more general notice method for those that wish to subscribe to it. This has allowed us to get the message out to an additional 370 people. In addition, we have been able to send specific messages to specific subsets of our members, including seniors or others who have identified specific interests.

We were also able to send out a survey to individuals that purchased our Feather Friendly window tape, getting some valuable feedback on how they used the tape and whether they have seen noticeable differences in bird strikes after putting up the tape.

Much of what is in the newsletter is written or proposed by board members and others with very little editing. Much of what I do is more on formatting and placement of photos. Thanks to all of you for your interest and support for what I do.

My volunteer hours are 450.

Jim Elliott, Editor

Conservation

The Conservation Grant was presented to Jordan Rustad for her research on urban wildlife. I extend my thanks to Janet Ng and Jackie Mertler for serving as the grant review committee.

Nature Regina has, with Public Pastures, Public interest, proposed to the city that the area of the Old Craig Golf Course be maintained as a natural grassland park. A surprising number of native wildflowers bloom there. This has started a discussion with the city which is still in early stages. I appreciate the leadership Gail Fennel and Trevor Herriot have provided on this issue and significant involvement from Board members, especially Jim Elliott, Elaine Ehman, and Ingrid Thiessen. An iNaturalist project was set up for this area and has helped document some of the native species there.

The society lobbied the city in favour of a bylaw restricting use of cosmetic pesticides to protect biodiversity. The city has reviewed the issue and it will return to Council at the end of May.

Volunteer hours – 78

Submitted by,
Dale Hjertaas , Conservation Director

Hidden Valley Nature Sanctuary

During summer of 2022 we completed development of new trails providing access to more areas and habitats in the sanctuary. New material has been placed on the website describing the sanctuary, rules for going there, and the trails. Signage for all the new trails is being developed and I plan to put new trail maps at the trail head in the near future.

We released beetles on a patch of Leafy Spurge in the sanctuary in 2022. They seemed to be establishing. We will be monitoring them in 2023 and hope they will help control the noxious weed on the sanctuary. I continued to pull Leafy Spurge at 2 smaller patches on the property.

I appreciate the significant assistance from Brian Armstrong, Brent Rosbrud, Elaine Ehman and youth volunteers from Canadian wildlife Federation.

Volunteer hours – 91, including trail work, leafy spurge control, developing material for website and developing information and trail signs.

Submitted by,
Dale Hjertaas , Hidden Valley Coordinator



2022 YEAR END REPORT FOR NATURE REGINA GARDEN PROJECTS

By the numbers:

1 Garden 6 Projects 66 Volunteers 100 volunteer days 2700 Volunteer hours

A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of the garden volunteers, Nature Regina Board members, and Peter Menzies, Executive Director, John Snell, Manager Exhibits and Programming and their staff and volunteers at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. Each is playing a part in a wonderful and amazing year at our garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum and our projects.

I am deeply grateful to our sixty-six volunteers and the people who supported them. We are creating inviting places to visit with thriving habitats whether we are outside at the gardens or behind the scenes organizing and advocating. This past year gave us a reminder of how resilient people are to find creative ways to survive two years of restrictions on public and personal behaviour. But many of us were also reminded that one never knows when oneself or one we hold dear will be faced with health challenges or tragedy. In spite of the personal events each of us faced, our resilience and community of spirit supported us through them.

2022 was a remarkable year at Nature Regina's native plant garden and projects. First because this was the first summer of the last three that people were mostly free to travel. Yet our 66 generous volunteers gave more days - 100 - and more time - an astonishing 2700 hours - to our garden and projects, than in any year since the garden rejuvenation began in 2018.

The second remarkable note of the season was the weather. A very late Spring with deep snow followed almost immediately by early, prolonged extreme heat during the day, but Spring-like night time temperatures of 10c or less, brought challenges for the plants, the insects, the birds living in or passing through our garden projects and the humans volunteering in those projects. The long Fall with above

average temperatures meant our last day in the gardens was November 01. That is almost 2 months later than in our first rejuvenation year.

THE 2022 GARDENING SEASON

Our garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum

The unusual Spring in 2022 meant there were far fewer insects in the garden than we usually see up until mid-July. The numbers of Bees recovered somewhat by mid-August but the number of species and the number of individuals was still much lower than other years. The Butterfly numbers were much lower than previous years. Many early blooming plants formed fewer seeds than other years. Anecdotally, this was partly because the pollinators appeared later than the blooms and partly, I think, due to the extreme day time temperatures changing the plants priorities to survival rather than seed production. The extreme heat on many days was challenging for the volunteers to work in, even on the days we started by 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. Nevertheless, our wonderful volunteers kept the garden looking tidy and inviting in spite of the heat, and in spite of missing 6 of our regular days due to rain.

The total number of volunteer hours for working in the Museum Garden, propagating plants, organizing the garden volunteers and organizing garden events is now at the equivalent of 1 full-time year-round job. This is not to suggest there be a paid position, only to put the work of our volunteers into the context of the effort required to maintain the garden.

We now have 135 species of plants either in the garden or being grown for the garden at volunteers' homes. This is almost double the number of species we identified in 2019.

Looking at the 2021 list of insects, it seems we eventually saw 87 of the 90 species seen in 2021. However, anecdotally, the number of individuals seen was significantly less due to the lateness in the season when nighttime temperatures were above 10c. I believe what would have been almost the entire first generation of bees and butterflies that was missing in May and June. As of Nov 14, I still have to id almost all the insects I photographed this season so the number of species seen may change.

Looking at the 2021 file of birds seen, the story is very different. Only 31 of the 47 bird species seen in 2021 were seen in 2022. Anecdotally, since perching birds were not significantly affected by the avian flu, I believe the birds late arrival by several weeks and lack of food (insects) when they arrived, caused many of the migrating birds to bypass the area. When I enter my remaining data for the season on eBird and check iNaturalist for observations, the total number of bird species may change.

The three mammals we usually see at the garden - Fox Squirrels, White-tailed Jackrabbits and Meadow Voles - were all seen in 2022. Sadly, on two occasions the Vole found was dead. Other years we have only seen none or one dead.

The newest bed at the Museum entrance

In August of 2021, we began maintaining the bed in the middle of the sidewalk at the Museum east entrance. Covering the bed with cardboard and a deep layer of mulch has been highly successful for eliminating the existing vegetation.

The theme of the bed is to demonstrate a more Prairie like mix of 70% grasses and sedges and 30% forbs that would be found growing in drier habitat south and west of Regina. This year we began installing some plants bought specifically for this bed and some suitable plants donated by volunteers who have been growing plants we need in their own gardens.

This bed is in a highly visible space for Museum visitors so there will be some temporary species grown in this bed for color and to fill space.

John Snell and Bette Shum, Exhibit Digital Designer created the delightful sign at the top of page 1 to let visitors and passersby know about plans for the bed.

I plan to have the majority of the permanent species installed by the end of the 2024 season.

Winter paths to feeders

New in Nov 2022: We began creating a team to clear snow from the paths to the bird feeders at the garden. 2021 saw more snow than one person should have to deal with when making sure the birds are fed. This year we will be ready!

Balgonie Acreage

April and Rick Stadneck, the owners of an acreage outside Balgonie, generously agreed for a second year to provide space for us to grow plants for seed collection and transplanting.

The same weather challenges at the Museum Garden also faced us at the Balgonie acreage. We had the added challenge of a lingering snow cover and saturated soil until mid-June. This meant we couldn't begin work before the invasive plants had a 6-week head start covering most of the bare soil and native plants.

Our intrepid volunteers didn't give up and managed to clear the beds of unwanted vegetation by the end of September. We decided not to bring more plants to the garden until we had a clear space for growing them. It may take two more seasons before we grow more species than what are already there.

This year we tried solarizing the beds. We rescued the plants we wanted to keep then covered the remaining vegetation with large sheets of plastic. The goal is to increase the temperature under the plastic to the point the vegetation can't survive. Best results occur if the temperature is maintained at over 24c. The extreme high temperatures ended about 10 days after we had the plastic in place. We are still hopeful that the unwanted vegetation will be greatly reduced in 2023 compared to 2022. A playful bonus working at the acreage were the two very friendly dogs who "helped" out and two tiny kittens who made sure we took water and cuddle breaks.

White City Acreage

Jeff Gamble and partner Fran, the owners of the White City acreage, generously agreed for a second year to provide space and care for potted plants growing beyond the seedling stage. They also kindly took care of the plants so the volunteers only needed to go to the acreage for plant identification, pick up for a project or drop off for winter fostering. This extra level of care by the acreage owners is very much appreciated.

Cuppa Sunshine, Donations, Fall Sale Fund Raiser

Our second annual Cuppa Sunshine event to celebrate Pollinator Week in June was very successful. We gave away over 100 native Annual Sunflowers in up-cycled drink cups. The event is a fun one because "everyone" loves bright cheerful Sunflowers. This year we asked for, and very much appreciate the assistance the Museum Visitor staff provided for distributing the Sunflowers.

Our second annual Fall native plant sale was an outstanding success. \$2800 raised for Nature Regina projects is fantastic and will support many Nature Regina projects. The Fall Sale demonstrates a real need and desire to have native plants locally available. The sale started at 10:00. Customers began lining up at 7:30 when we arrived to set up!

But this day was so successful because of volunteers. These twenty amazing, generous people gave 75 hours of their time on the day of the sale alone. Many additional hours were spent reviewing how we could improve the logistics of the first sale, organizing people and plants, making signs and information sheets and months of caring for over 700 plants. We were so organized we had 20 minutes before the sale to catch our breath before we opened.

Donations are a significant source of income for Nature Regina. Several unexpected donations came to us following Museum visitor's chats with gardeners. I am most grateful for the enthusiastic way our garden volunteers share their love of the garden bringing a positive response from the person they engage. Some people respond by volunteering, some with a donation when they learn we are Nature Regina volunteers.

I am also grateful to the gardener volunteers and others who enter Nature Regina's name in their workplace Employee Volunteer Draws. We were a recipient of \$500 from one of the SaskPower draws. I am very appreciative that because this garden volunteer took the time to enter Nature Regina's name. Especially because this is the second time we have received a donation this way.

Paige Guillaume, one of the Plant Fosters who is also a Butterflyway Ranger was persuaded by her supervisor at work to make a presentation to 100 Men Who Care to win a grant for her oak tree project. Paige and I made the presentation together in early June. We didn't win the grant but we are very grateful Paige's project could move ahead with two donations we received immediately from individuals in the group and a third donation a few weeks later as an ecard birthday gift from one of the people who heard our presentation for a total of \$300.

Community Initiative - Heritage Art Park

In November 2020, a conversation I had with the area City Parks Maintenance Supervisor about the state of the Heritage Art Park, led to conversations with Nature Regina member Phil Johnson and Heritage Community Association executive. In April 2021, a project partnership began with a plan to clean up and renovate the neglected park on 11 Ave at Halifax St. Phil and Devon Anderson lead a team of volunteers in creating pleasant spaces in the Heritage Art Park for food security and community members to gather. Seventeen amazing volunteers from Knox Metropolitan United Church, Nature Regina, and the Heritage Community, along with the Heritage Community Association executive have created a truly community-oriented and community led partnership for this project.

Community Initiative - Angus Boulevard pollinator patch

The pollinator patch on Angus Boulevard begun in 2019 is maturing into beautiful pollinator oasis. Donna Holmes and Jim Holmes continue to demonstrate how neighbours can come together to create and care for better habitat for pollinators and maintain edible garden plots in public spaces. Donna and Jim have commented that people purposely plan their walks in the neighbourhood to come to see what is new the pollinator patches and garden beds.

Community Initiative - Massey Road School grade 6/7 pollinator patch

In May of 2022 the Grade 6/7 class created a pollinator patch. This is a student led project supported by their teacher, Jared Clarke. The next class took over caring for the garden in September 2022. We have shared seeds and plants from the Museum Garden with students.

Community Initiative - St Augustine Community School grade 6/7 pollinator patch

Matt Kampman and his grade 6/7 class have created a native plant garden in several raised beds at their school. We have supplied some grass seeds and some Aster plants for both school garden and for

students to take home to grow. Several of the students were excited to bring home plants they could grow in their parents' garden.

Community Initiative - Immanuel Church pollinator patch

In the summer of 2021, a family member reached out to me about creating a pollinator patch for Immanuel Anglican Church on Massey Road. The pollinator patch would be part of their "Tending to Creation" initiative help church members learn how to create more diverse habitats in their yards. Plans for the patch began with a Museum Garden tour and talk with several church members in September 2021.

Several people began growing plants from seeds we gave them and we also set aside and over-wintered some plants that had been removed from the garden due to overcrowding. By June 2022, the church group was ready to begin planting and a new pollinator habitat began to take shape. Further work in August doubled the size of the pollinator patch with more plants donated by Nature Regina and church members. The are plans to further increase the size of the patch in 2023.

Community Initiative - Seed Sharing, Seed Sitters, Plant Fosters

The most pressing need for native plant diversity and abundance in our projects, and in general, southern Saskatchewan, is an ethical, sustainable source of truly local southern Saskatchewan species. We are striving to have an earlier more diverse bloom season particularly for the earliest appearing pollinators who hibernate over the winter, like Milbert's Tortoiseshell and Mourning Cloak Butterflies do, or migrate from the southern US like Painted Lady does.

Most of the earliest blooming southern Saskatchewan native plants are not available commercially. It may be possible to ethically wild collect seeds of some species if we find populations of sufficient size but the number of plants we could grow each year would be too few for even our current projects.

Two years ago, I proposed we begin a southern Saskatchewan seed sharing collective and began distributing seeds to people who requested them. I have since discovered that Nora Stewart, one of the Museum Garden founders, made the same suggestion nearly 13 years ago! And now in November 2022, Colleen Cirillo, David Suzuki Foundation Butterflyway administrator for the Prairies, has suggested Rangers form seed collection and distribution hubs.

Two garden volunteers who are Rangers and myself met with Colleen and several other Rangers from MB NB NS and ON in early November 2022 to discuss how to make more local seeds and plants available, particularly in the areas with no nearby suppliers. Colleen told us that the Butterflyway through the David Suzuki foundation may be able to assist Rangers and local conservation groups to

increase the availability of local native plants. We have had two meetings to date and plan to have regular meetings to create a plan to increase seed and plant availability for the next growing season.

Fewer people asked for seeds through the Nature Regina website contact than in 2021. I have not yet investigated the reasons for this. I can say that 3 of the 61 people requesting seeds in 2021 became Seed Sitters and or Plant Fosters this year and another 3 from 2021 asked for and received more seeds this year. I will be following up with the people who requested seeds to hear about their experience growing native plants.

Seed Sitters is a Butterflyway project where volunteers monitor seeds from planting to seedling stage. They then share the seedlings with others looking for native plants for their gardens.

Plant Fosters take care of plants from seedlings until they are more mature or provide space to over winter plants that have to be moved but haven't got a permanent home yet. Even before the garden rejuvenation, garden volunteers and other members were Seed Sitters and Plant Fosters providing our Museum Garden with plants.

There was a good response among the volunteer gardeners this Fall when I asked for people to be Seed Sitters sowing hundreds more seeds to grow plants for our projects, for seed collection and the Fall plant sale. Nevertheless, we will need many more Seed Sitters and Plant Fosters to supply the Museum Garden and meet the demand we have seen at the Fall sale.

Community Initiative - Webinars, Talks and Tours

Three garden volunteers presented webinars this year. In February, Ingrid Thiessen presented a beautiful showcase of the Butterflies in her garden for the Regina Public Library. Two presentations showcase gardens that qualified for the Society for Organic Landcare Greener Greenspace designation. They were shown nationally and recorded. They can be seen on the Soul website as part of 2022 Year of the Ecological Garden series. In March, Phil Johnson presented a virtual tour of the Know Metropolitan United Church gardens. In August, I presented virtual history tour of our garden at the Museum.

Jared Clarke, a teacher at Massey Road School brought a class to the garden for a tour and talk in June and another class for a talk and tour in November. His students are leading the care and decision making for a pollinator patch at their school. We have shared seeds and plants with students in both classes. When Matt Kampman brought his class for a tour of the garden and Museum, in June, Matt stopped to chat briefly with me about a native plant garden he and his class had created at their school. We talked again in September and arranged that I would come to the school to give a short talk and demonstration on planting seedlings. Seeds and a plant were given to each student who wanted to take one home.

Film maker Greg Francis was contracted by the David Suzuki Foundation Butterflyway to interview Rangers across Canada for film, tv and a series on the Butterflyway. Greg was in Regina to interview me for the Butterflyway Diaries but he also joined the Bird Strike Survey team downtown at 6 am to video Jim Elliot and myself in survey action. At our season windup in November, the Rangers were treated to a rough cut of the first segment in the series featuring myself and 5 other interviews.

An international group of university students attending a Discovery Camp at U of Regina came to the Museum Garden for a lively tour and talk with Q&A about Prairie native plants, restoration and Prairie in their home provinces and countries.

Monique Van Wyk from a Sasktel division had emailed last year trying to arrange a program to trial installation of native plants on a SaskTel property and later to have a group from work volunteer at our garden. Neither went through in 2021. In June we finally connected and Monique brought 8 volunteers from Sasktel to spend an enjoyable afternoon potting up plants and tidying the garden while another coworker recorded the event on his phone.

Wascana Freewheelers, a cycling club, stopped on their progressive dinner trip in August to meet me for a short talk about the garden plus Q&A.

The volunteers enjoyed many more chats over the summer with passersby and Museum visitors from across Canada who paused to chat about the garden and our work there.

Community Initiative Follow-up - Wascana Park

In December 2019, Elaine Ehman and I had a very successful meeting with Sarah Romuld, Wascana Park ecologist. We identified several areas of collaboration between Nature Regina and Wascana Park. The plans we made to share seeds for a Wascana project and for a partnership family event building tree swallow houses were put on hold by the public health restrictions. I believe it would be worth renewing contact with Sarah in 2023 to discuss implementing these ideas.

Community Initiative Follow-up - Prince of Wales Library Seed Library

In 2019, two Nature Regina gardeners volunteered to help the Children's program Librarian maintain the Children's garden. We also donated a few plants. The sessions went well over the summer. In 2020 and 2021 public health restrictions meant the partnership was put on hold. In October, I stopped at the Library to touch base with the Librarian. She is no longer at the branch but I have previously met the Librarian now in charge of the Children's garden.

On Nov 13 2022, I received an email and invitation to share seeds for a Seed Library that will begin in spring 2023. We will be contributing seeds to at least one other branch's Seed Library. Seeds in the libraries may be vegetables, flowers or native plants.

Community Initiative Follow-up - Pilot Butte storm water pond

In June of 2019, I noticed Scarlet Mallow growing by the storm pond behind the closed Sears store on Quance Street. A tour of the area with the property manager revealed 13 native species and 6 invasives. We were given permission to sow twenty-three species of seeds and plants in the area that Fall. Subsequent messages and calls to the manager were not returned. This may have been because the management was turned over to the condo association who own the property. The site has since been taken over by leafy spurge. I don't believe we currently have enough volunteer resources to reconnect with this potential project.

Community Initiative Follow-up - City of Regina Parks and Open Spaces

In 2020 and 2021, we met on a casual basis with several members of one of the City Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance teams to explore growing native plants in City of Regina green spaces. The talks went well and resulted in Nature Regina sharing seeds and plants with the team. The plants were installed in pilot site that has been a challenge to source plants that can withstand the harsh conditions. This initiative was put on hold in 2022 as team members moved to new positions and different divisions. However, contact with the team and the aims of the initiative are being maintained through the Heritage

Art Park Project partnership.

Greener Greenspace designation

The Society for Organic Urban Landcare created the Greener Greenspace designation to recognize and nationally showcase spaces, not organizations, that are examples of the most ecologically responsible land care. The designation must be applied for each year. The applicant must demonstrate improvement of the care beyond what was done the previous year.

We were thrilled to gain the designation for the garden at the Museum and the garden at the Knox Metropolitan United Church. It is a goal we should aim for in all our garden projects as a way of teaching better stewardship of urban spaces.

Challenges maintaining our garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Sustaining volunteer numbers and leadership beyond five years

2022 was our 5th summer / 4th full year of my five-year plan to rejuvenate our garden at the Museum.

I am humbled by and grateful for the dedication of the volunteers who are sustaining the project over these many years. I have been very well supported by people coming forward to volunteer since 2018. I do have to recognize, though, that we need to be actively looking for volunteers who are willing to learn to be the organizers of our projects. I do not want the garden projects to rely on the energy and leadership of a few people who begin any of our projects. Over many years, that is not sustainable as we could see from the appearance of the garden prior to 2017. People may be willing but for various reasons, not able to continue volunteering at the garden.

This was a very good year at the garden but many events happened for our volunteers that made me realize the Nature Regina Board, garden volunteers and I need to create plan to share and sustain the knowledge base we are building on how to care for an urban native plant garden. That way, with a plan and hands-on training, new leaders would not be starting from scratch learning how to care for the garden and the volunteers.

Sourcing truly local native plants

Few of the southern Saskatchewan dry land plants we need can be sourced at commercial growers in Canada. Most grasses and sedges grow quickly so I believe growing them from seed is a viable option. I was invited by owners of two properties, one near Valeport and one at Regina Beach, to tour their property to identify native plants. I and another volunteer were able to tour the property near Valeport. They did indeed have many of the native plants we are sourcing for the Museum Garden. We will talk further with owner about collecting seeds. We will visit the Regina Beach property in 2023. A third volunteer has received seeds we are looking for from a farm near Yorkton. I think we have found the beginning of our seed sharing collective.

Sourcing for garden at the Museum and our projects

In November 2022 I ordered seeds of species that have always lived here but are not available as plants from a Saskatchewan source that I know. My orders include grasses, sedges and a few flowers. Of the seventy-one species ordered, all but four grasses and one forb are species we do not currently have in the garden. One grass will replace a grass we have not been able to definitively identify. We have not been able to collect enough seed of the other four grasses to have the abundance we need for the garden in less than three years.

Growing forbs from seed takes at least two to five seasons before they are mature enough to survive on their own. This means we need a multi-year plan and commitment from Seed Sitters and Plant Fosters even if only to provide plants for the Museum and other garden projects.

Sourcing for the public

Supplying the public with plants grown from seed will require many volunteers' gardens or a large outdoor space with water access and a volunteer group dedicated to that project. It would be ideal from a volunteer access perspective if the space was in Regina.

One option to increase availability could be to order the limited species for this area that are available as plugs and resell them at or near cost during a time limited sale in mid-June, possibly in connection with Pollinator week and Nature Regina's 90th Anniversary in 2023. This would not be a fund raiser. Sales would recover the cost of the plants and mileage to pick up the plants from the suppliers. In the event any plants were left over, they could be used in projects or grown out for the Fall fundraiser.

Maintaining rhizomatous plants

Our determined volunteers have almost completely removed the quack grass and lawn grasses from the Museum Garden. I would say completely but like the Elms, there's always one more. The volunteers now spend a significant amount of their time removing the rhizomes of native plants. Showy Milkweed, Wild Licorice, Prairie Rose and Beautiful Sunflower are the most aggressive. Reducing the populations by reducing the space available to them may be the simplest answer.

My plan is to make the garden more self-sustaining through better plant choices. Increasing the number of grass and sedge species and individuals should, i believe, help control the more aggressive plants and at the same time provide habitat and forage for more Skipper, Checker, Fly and Beetle species.

Water for transplants

Watering the transplants has become one of the more difficult puzzles to solve at the garden. For at least the next three years we will be bringing hundreds of new young plants to the Museum Garden. They will need more water and attention than mature plants.

Currently, our only three options are not water transplants, ask for the sprinklers to be turned on for the whole garden or haul water by the jugful. None of the options are ideal. Not watering plants with young root systems almost guarantees they will die. Watering the entire garden weakens the older plants by encouraging tall straggly growth. We also discovered in 2019, the last year the sprinklers were used, that we have no control over the timing of the sprinklers. The garden was often still too wet to work in when we arrived at our regular work times.

We have reduced the watering at the garden as much as possible by sending potted plants to Plant Fosters and not using garden space to start seeds.

I will continue in 2023 to seek a sensible solution to our water dilemma.

PLANS FOR 2023

Our general garden and project plan is to increase the bloom time and increase plant diversity and abundance. This will lead to a more diverse habitat and more species of wildlife benefitting from our gardens. We will introduce new native plants, mostly grasses and sedges, that contribute to a sustainable plant and wildlife community that relies less on the current amount of human intervention to keep rambunctious plants in check and more on the plants themselves to share the space without taking over.

Community Initiative - Insect identification

One measure of how successful our garden projects are is by tracking the diversity of species calling the Museum Garden home. To do that we need to be able to identify the species. One volunteer helped this year with insect and spider id for which I am grateful.

The Royal Saskatchewan Museum is a named location on iNaturalist so one can do a search for observations at that location only. As an example, in 2022 to Nov 10, 589 observations of 205 species have been made by 34 people.

I think it is worth using iNaturalist beginning or more accurately tracking invertebrates in the garden rather than relying on observations made while the volunteers are in the garden.

Holding a bioblitz at one or more of our projects in conjunction with a national or regional bioblitz could bring attention to our projects. It could also provide information over time that we can share with the public on the benefits of improving habitat for wildlife.

Volunteer Training

I have begun tracking the hours volunteers spend taking courses, webinars and researching subjects related to our projects and reconciliation with the land. This information will recognize the knowledge they use in caring for the gardens. It may also provide information about which webinars and talks the public would like us to give or at least share details so they can attend the events.

A more formalized training program may give volunteers the confidence to take on new roles. This would help with continuity in current projects and increase the number of projects we can run.

Regina Public Library Seed Library

Starting in November 2022 through Spring 2023, the garden volunteers will be meeting for "Seedy teas" to clean package and label seeds for the Seed Libraries. We will explore whether the library needs talks, webinars or hands on live events around learning to grow plants from seed.

Nature Regina 90th anniversary

I have tentatively begun exploring the logistics of creating an event to celebrate our 90th anniversary for Pollinator week Jun 19 to 25 2023. For example, the Spring sale option I mentioned in sourcing native plants for the public.

Another possibility could be 90 (native plants and grasses) for 9 (new pollinator patches) with a specially made Nature Regina 90th anniversary sign. Perhaps this could be partnered with the Butterflyway. Either event requires planning to start in November / December 2022 and plants be ordered or seeded at the end of January 2023.

Our garden 30th anniversary in 2024 and Hidden Valley's 70th in 2025

One idea for celebrating these anniversaries is to choose a particular species to give away or make available at a sale to celebrate the anniversary. If we grow from seed, we will need to prep the seeds in January to February and Fall of 2023.

Heritage Art Park

Phil Johnson's plans were relayed to me in an email November 02, 2022:

There'll be lots to do next spring [2023]. We removed the gazebo [in 2022] and found a concrete pad underneath it. We'll move the large metal sculpture from the front corner onto the pad at the back corner. That will open up the very visible front corner where the sculpture was, and we'll put in pollinator plants with more fruit shrubs there, making quite a splash I think! Hopefully we'll have water too. Phil Note: The City of Regina had agreed earlier in 2022 to install a water source.

Bird Bath

The bowl of the bird bath at the Museum Garden was knocked off the pedestal and broken last summer.

The gardeners had several discussions on whether to replace the bowl or ask for a different way to offer water to the birds. The supply chain issues at the time meant there was little to choose from and nothing as durable as the previous bowl was available so the decision was to see what was available in Spring of 2023. Researching the options, I discovered that few materials used for bird baths will survive the prolonged cold here if the bird bath stays outside. The most suitable material is still solid concrete.

We should consider adding a second bird bath because it is unlikely we will persuade the resident Crow family to stop using the bath to soften food for their young. Perhaps the Crows would use one bath and the other birds use the second.

The gardeners considered other water features such, as a small fountain, that wouldn't have the stagnation issues the bird bath had. These options were better for providing clean water to the birds but require a higher cost than the bowl bath and cooperation from the Provincial Capital Commission for design and water supply.

Volunteers at work sign

Three years ago, chats with passersby and garden visitors indicated many people are surprised to discover we are volunteers not staff of the Museum or Wascana Park. To make our role clear, we made a sign that was supposed to be temporary. This year the gardeners will discuss what we would like to have on the sign. We are considering having the sign professionally printed.

Many, many thanks go to each of the people who volunteered their time to share their enthusiasm, labour and ideas so willingly to make our garden projects and other urban spaces havens for plants, insects and animals and oases of nature for humans to enjoy, too.

Sincerely,

Gail Fennell

Nature Regina volunteer and garden volunteer coordinator



News and Notes

I continue to monitor the obituaries online and in the Regina Leader Post. One card of condolence was sent to the family on the death of a Nature Regina member. One email message of encouragement was sent to the president of the Saskatoon Nature Society. I sent cards inviting our past presidents to attend our 90th celebration the President's Picnic scheduled for August 19th.

Sincerely,
Helen McCaslin

Director Reports

Linda Langenbacher

I have attended by zoom 90% of board and general meetings, and promote Nature Regina and its activities wherever I go. I will be part of the Seniors group, as my hip arthritis prevents much walking.

Linda Langenbacher

Ingrid Thiessen

I helped the conservation officer (Dale) write a letter to the City for their Parks Master Plan Process ; I wrote a draft letter of concern over the Wascana Pool lights; wrote draft letter of support to the City of Regina for the Craig Golf course project and assisted with the submission to the city; and wrote a letter regarding irrigation at the RSM Museum. I participated in the review of Nature Regina job descriptions and attended most board meetings.

I volunteered at the Sustainability Expo and at the RSM garden, including the plant sale. I attended the Wascana Open House and worked on a draft letter to Wascana Center for their Master Plan. I volunteered at the Cathedral Children's play area with Jim Elliott. I developed a game called the Regina Songbird Trivia game and a treasure box and collected trees for planting.

Though I did not represent Nature Regina at the City Executive Meeting May 3, 2023 on the pesticide bylaw, I did speak to the issue and it did take time to put the presentation together. The main focus was using one of Gail Fennell's points, the inequity of the options. If they decide to choose option 3 (do only education) they should increase the amount equal or more than the other options. I then explained how to spend the money to make a true difference in pesticide use.

My main input has been in the native plant design at Westminster United Church to install a healing garden. Native Plants have been ordered from Prairie Originals for Phase One of the project. This may or may not require some help from Nature Regina for weeding and/or installation help. I picked up plants for the Westminster healing garden and supplied plants from my yard.

Approximately 120 hours has been spent on activities.

Ingrid Thiessen

Education and Public Outreach



Get Outside! Field Trips

The Get Outside! Field Trips were offered to grade 1 to 5 classes at Community Schools in Regina. In 2022-23, Nature Regina offered 17 field trips to 424 students through this program.

Community schools often have difficulty accessing outdoor education as the cost of transportation is sometimes not affordable. Thanks to funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Fund and the Every Bite Affects the World – Local Action Award, Nature Regina was able to offer these field trips for free to Community Schools.

Kenny Chaplin led the Get Outside! Field Trips in the fall with 11 schools and Shannon Chernick led the winter field trips with 6 schools. The fall field trips included nature exploration, pond dipping, guided hikes including a fast hike and a slow-motion hike, Indigenous Games and nest building. The winter field trips included snowshoeing, learning to birdwatch, bird scavenger hunt, predator-prey games, guided hikes and Indigenous games. All the schools were extremely grateful for this opportunity!

Submitted by Shannon Chernick

Get Outside! Kids Club

Nature Regina has been delivering the Get Outside! Kids Club program since the fall of 2020, at the start of the pandemic, and due to the popularity of the program and available resources, we have continued this program. In 2022-23, the Get Outside! Kids Club offered 23 events totalling 123 hours of outdoor programming for 1,771 participants. The fall programs were led by Dave Drummond and the winter programs by Shannon Chernick.

The Get Outside! Kids Club is a free outdoor learning program offered by Nature Regina, Nature Saskatchewan and SaskOutdoors for children and their parent/caregiver between the ages of 6 and 13. Each month a new park or open area is explored with nature-based, hands-on activities that support nature connection and recreation. In 2022, in all four seasons, we explored AE Wilson Park, Les Sherman Park, Lakeridge Park North, McKell Wascana Conservation Park and several locations in Wascana Park including the Habitat Conservation Area, Royal Saskatchewan Museum – Native Prairie Plant Garden and Wascana Waterfowl Display Ponds. Activities for our fall, spring and summer sessions included plant identification, insect spotting, predator-prey games, birdwatching, nature scavenger hunts, Indigenous Games, Elder storytelling, nature arts and crafts, pond dipping, guided hikes and more. In the winter we focused on recreation activities to keep us warm including snowshoeing, cross country skiing, hiking, birdwatching, winter kitchen, science experiments, shelter building and many predator prey games!

Nature Regina is the only organization in the City of Regina providing 100% outside, outdoor learning and education programming for children and families. There is a lot of research about the mental and physical health benefits of spending time outside. Kids are three times as active when they are learning, exploring and playing outside as when they are inside. Just 20 minutes in nature resets our nervous system and creates a calming effect for anyone. Surveys from the program show that participating in the Get Outside! Kids Club improves mental and physical health for children and parent participants. Almost 100% of participants indicated that they would be returning to the park that was explored to spend time with family and friends. A huge thanks to the City of Regina for funding the Get Outside! Kids Club.

Submitted by Shannon Chernick

Get Outside! Preschool Club

Since August 2022, I have had the pleasure of running the Nature Regina Get Outside! Preschool Club. This program is an outdoor learning program for children between the ages of 2 and 5 who are accompanied by a parent/caregiver. All sessions this year have had full registration – the program has often been full within a day of opening registration!

The focus of the Get Outside! Preschool Club is to provide positive outdoor experiences for preschoolers and their parent/caregiver by introducing registrants to local nature spaces as well as inspiring caregivers and children to spend more time connecting and engaging in their own nature spaces (backyards and/or public spaces in their own neighbourhoods).

From September 2022 to May 2023, we offered 19 events and had over 650 registrants. Many registrants in the current Spring program are attending the program for the first time. It has become a very popular program which is so encouraging since it means that more children and caregivers are interested and engaged in outdoor programming!

Each month, we explored a different park or green space in Regina with nature-based programming, exploration and activities which have included predator-prey games, scavenger hunts, bird watching and identification, pond dipping, animal tracks, using our 5 senses, noticing changing of seasons, and learning about different animals and how they survive.

As part of the program, we have an outdoor story time as well as activities and crafts that promote engagement and learning in a nature-based setting. Many caregivers have commented that they want to use the activities and books in their own spaces! Unstructured outdoor play with loose parts is an important part of learning and exploring in this program. Loose parts include sticks, pinecones, snow, rocks, mud, etc. Children have also loved playing in our water kitchen and snow kitchen! The winter snow saws were also a hit!

During 2022-2023, the Get Outside! Preschool Club explored Les Sherman Park, Lakeridge Park North, Kiwanis Park, Habitat Conservation Area, AE Wilson Park, McKell Wascana Conservation Park and the Native Prairie Plant Garden by the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

Fostering children's connection to nature helps promote emotion regulation, develops physical literacy, and develops a respect for self, others, and other living things. Developing a connection to nature also promotes action related to climate justice and conservation in the long-term.

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to continue to provide nature-based programming in Regina. I look forward to continuing to learn in and with Nature along with the registrants in the Get Outside! Preschool Club in the coming year! A huge thanks to the City of Regina for partnering with Nature Regina for the Get Outside! Preschool Club program. (Regina.ca).

Cheryl Hymus-Fraser
Coordinator of Get Outside! Preschool Club

Bird Safe Initiative

The highlights of the BSI initiative can be summed up in two areas. Firstly, the continued support for the program itself and secondly, the leveraging for bird safe awareness in the community. The fall event last year (held from September 12th to 18th, 2022) collected 28 birds including 10 rescues and 10 different species. The spring program ran from May 8th to 14th, 2023 and logged 26 collisions and 4 rescues with 13 different species showing up. To date we have collected 190 birds and rescued 37 birds with 40 different species collected. All of the injured birds are taken to Salthaven West for recovery. Deceased birds are delivered to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum where they are prepared and entered into the provincial museum collection for use by scientists, and artists. I thank the following for helping with surveys for bird strikes: Elaine Ehman, Jim Elliott, Gail Fennell, Mary field, Ryan Fisher, Tara Sample, Margaret Skeel, Dominick Smarda and Jill, Angela Tremka, and Lacy Weekes and a friend.



In total there have been 91 volunteer hours put into the data collection portion of the program. This information is making a difference as we get more Feather Friendly window markers into the community. Gail Fennell put me in contact with Tara Sample, Senior Environmental Advisor for SaskEnergy, who is interested in attending our Bird Safe Initiative and putting in place some sort of plan to collect strike data at SaskEnergy buildings provincially. We have continued support from Brett Quiring of SaskPower, and have had further discussions with Lindsay Mazenc of Sasktel. In total, our community here in Regina has logged over 200 birds into the Global Collision Bird Mapper (<https://www.birdmapper.org/>); more than Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, Cincinnati, or Kansas City.

Our next event will be the week of September 11th - 17th; 2023. Members are encouraged to join us.



With the BSI events we are able to leverage some action within the community. Jim Elliott organized an Earth Day event that I participated in where we promoted Nature Regina and the Cathedral Neighbourhood Forest Project. We made contact with Anthony Woodward, RPL's Community Librarian, and have plans to utilize their 'Cube Room' for an introduction to birds and the threats window collisions pose. Hopefully this will involve some specimens from the RSM, a video component, and

Feather Friendly window markers applied to the glass in the room. We are planning on also offering a beginner bird watching presentation in conjunction with the exhibit.

Nature Saskatchewan's World Migratory Bird Day was another great event that saw environmental awareness brought to the community with a child friendly approach. Elaine Ehman and I had an opportunity to promote further Feather Friendly window markers. The teepee raising and the talent of traditional Indigenous dancers is a great step for building relationships with Indigenous communities.

Elaine Ehman and I are also working on a preliminarily Purple Martin project to build a team to maintain houses that run the risk of not being maintained. We have a couple of younger new members looking at taking on the project.

Volunteer hours for the BSI spring and fall migration counts are 80 hours per year; my total volunteer hours are 140.

Submitted by,
Jeff Gamble

Bird Friendly City

On February 10th, 2023 Mayor Sandra Masters sent a letter to Nature Canada reinforcing the City's commitment to maintaining our BFC designation. This support from the city is a mandatory requirement to keep our certification and we were pleased to receive it one month shy of our first anniversary. Ms Masters also proclaimed January 5, 2024, as National Bird Day.

Early in 2023, Nature Saskatchewan was approached by the Regina Performing Arts Centre about doing an art exhibit in their lobby. On behalf of the BFC, Nature Saskatchewan applied for and received a \$3,000 grant from Nature Canada to support the Bird Friendly Regina project. These funds were used to put on a nature themed art exhibit.

The exhibit focused on Regina as a Bird Friendly City and ran during February and March 2023. The exhibit included photos, paintings, carvings and other artwork about birds in our city. The exhibit also included information about the Bird Friendly City designation and actions that people in the city can take to keep birds safe. The signed copy of our Bird Friendly City designation was displayed.

The opening reception for the Bird Friendly exhibit at the Performing Art Centre on March 2nd was a great success. It was well attended and folks were very engaged. Unfortunately, and for various reasons, no one attended from the city. There was no media present but I was interviewed for the CBC's Morning Edition and Shannon Chernick (Nature Saskatchewan) appeared on Global TV.

During the exhibit, the Performing Arts Centre had Bird Friendly window tape, Nature Sask's Backyard *Bird Feeding* book as well as memberships to Nature Saskatchewan all for sale.

Part of the grant funds are being used for Public Education with such events as teaching citizens about birds in our city and how they can keep them safe. The events include nature hikes in parks in Regina

plus family friendly activities including the World Migratory Bird Day event held on May 13th. We plan to continue our outreach to underserved communities such as clients of the Regina Open Door Society, Regina Immigrant Women, North Central Community Association, City Kidz and others.



Nature Canada hosts Community of Practice (COP) webinars for the BFC teams and I attend them regularly. It's a great opportunity to have good discussions with other bird teams and learn from each other.

The BFC application form was revised in 2023 and as a result, we have some stricter guidelines to adhere to. Some of the changes mentioned: in order to achieve a "high" rating your city must have a "no roaming cats" bylaw (which we do, but we're not sure about actual enforcement); in order to reach intermediate or high, cities will need a resolution supporting the BFC (we currently only have the letter of support); if no progress is made on your application within a year, you may lose certification. Nature Canada has approved funding for the next three years for the BFC program, which our team was excited to hear.

On March 10th, 2023, the first anniversary of Regina becoming a Bird Friendly City, Shannon Chernick (Nature Saskatchewan) and I attended a meeting with Russell Eirich, Manager, Open Spaces (City of Regina) and others to discuss how the city can get involved. Russell was very happy to see how the BFC ties in with their Tree City designation. We have since been working on a number of initiatives such as: replacing the Shrike for Shrubs signage in AE Wilson Park and adding BFC signage as well. We talked about using QR codes to help connect people with bird facts. They're now also aware of the need for new signs on Boreal and Prairie Islands and will address those at the same time.

Angela Tremka who is a member of the Bird Friendly City Committee as well as a staff at Salthaven West and the Last Mountain Bird Observatory has developed a bird guide for A.E. Wilson Park. Angela made the guide so it is easily viewed using a phone:

<https://www.naturesask.ca/nature-sk-friends/bird-friendly-regina>

Shannon has provided lots of information on the birds in the parks from doing Nature Regina's Get Outside! programming. The city is excited to hold the City Bird event. We'll call for nominations from citizens, hold a vote and announce the city bird on January 5th, 2024. Start thinking about which bird you think should represent our city and be prepared to defend it!

The city will be developing a new Forestry Masterplan in 2024 so we'll have to keep that on our radar for such things as providing more native habitat, leaving more snags, etc.

Jeff Gamble and I attended Nature Saskatchewan's World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) on May 13th, and engaged with children and parents on behalf of the BFC.

Our team consists of 15 individuals from various nature organizations, including several members from Nature Regina. I'd particularly like to thank Angela Tremka from Salthaven West who does our social media and along with Nature Saskatchewan, maintains our website; Lacey Weeks and Shannon Chernick from Nature Saskatchewan; and Dr. Ryan Fisher from the RSM who is our science advisor and provides excellent resources and support.

My volunteer hours for BFC average around 25 hours per year; my total volunteer hours are 300.

Respectfully,
Elaine Ehman



Every Bite Affects the World - Local Action Awards

The Every Bite journey continues, inspired by the book *Every Bite Affects the World: an earth care cookbook for joyful, mindful eating*, by Catherine Verrall and friends.

In 2021 The Every Bite Project partnered with Nature Regina to create the **Every Bite Affects the World Local Action Awards**. These Awards honour Catherine's life-long commitment to environmental and social justice, and continue the journey of growing awareness and action. The award is a cash donation of \$800 and opportunity to share their story as part of a social media video series, produced by Nature Regina.

In April 2022 four award recipients were announced:

- North Central Community Association -Community Gardens
- Heritage Community Association – 11th Avenue Art Park
- Prairie Sky School – Food Forest and Mural
- Buffalo People Arts Institute

Two more awards were announced in 2023.

- City Street Farms
- Nature Regina - Get Outside! Programs

A few highlights from the 2022-23 year are below...



Prairie Sky School Food Forest and Mural.

This mural was unveiled at a wonderful ceremony held in May 2022 at Prairie Sky School. We were honoured to be in attendance as children sang “*The Earth is Our Mother*” and other songs taught to students by Catherine Verrall when she visited the school in earlier days. Special thanks to teachers Anna Rose, Peter Steel and their students.

Heritage Community Association Art Park Food Forest

This small park in Regina’s downtown was rejuvenated this year with the help of volunteers and community partners. Food-producing trees and plants were added to the existing park, along with more native plants to enhance pollinator and butterfly habitat. This project will increase access to food, complementing the well-used pantry in the park, and improve the beauty of the area. Thanks to Master Gardener Phil Johnson for his leadership on this project. In 2023 this project was recognized by the Society of Organic Urban Land Care (SOUL) Greener Green Spaces Program.



Gardens for Change Tour and Talk Series

In the summer of 2022, the Every Bite Project in partnership with Regina Seedy Saturday, and Nature Regina launched a series of garden tours and talks around the theme of Food Sovereignty. We held four tours in 2022. Approximately 60 participants in total attend these sessions.

The photo shows Maegan Krajewski of North Central Community Gardens leading a tour. They support community gardens in 7 public spaces and their Branch Out Project supports residents to have a garden at their own home. The Every Bite Award enabled their Branch

Out Project to expand residences this year.

The Gardens for Change events held in 2022 were:

- July 24 – Denis MacDonald – Permaculture Regina Angus Boulevard gardens on City property.
- August 9 – Master Gardener Phil Johnson and the Edible Food Forest at the 11th Avenue Art Park
- August 21 - Maegan Krajewski – North Central Community Gardens and Branch Out Project
- September 13 - Chef Brianna Kroener and Michelle Dakiniewich at the Cathedral Community Garden – community fridges, mutual aid and sowing seeds of change through community gardens

The Every Bite Awards are funded by book sales and donations to the Every Bite Project made through Nature Regina.

Volunteer hours for this project are 25; total volunteer hours are 184.

Submitted by,
Elizabeth Verrall

Treasurer's Report

Nature Regina's 2022-23 financial statements underwent a formal review for a second year, in accordance with provincial requirements. A copy of the review accompanies the Annual Report. Please refer to the review.

Nature Regina continues in a good financial position. Our total assets are \$43,482, with \$30,000 of current assets invested in a GIC, and capital assets comprised of small holdings in outdoor equipment (\$560) and our Hidden Valley Nature Reserve (\$327). Our activities resulted in higher revenues than expenses, with a surplus of \$3,914. Membership revenues increased, and our members provided good support to our programs through donations – thank you! Our fundraising endeavors – the sale of our annual members' calendar and bird-friendly window tape, as well as our native plant sale – were great successes. Our new fundraiser of sets of 10 cards, in celebration of our 90th Anniversary in 2023, began in April 2023. Thank you for making our fundraisers a great success, resulting in an overall total of \$3,277 gained, with additional window tape and card sets to sell.

Our surplus of \$3,914 was the result of good revenues and lower expenses than anticipated. Our meeting space costs were again significantly lower than expected, largely due to renovations at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum auditorium resulting in our using the board room for some meetings and not requiring an AV technician. Costs budgeted for our 90th Anniversary celebrations planned for later this year were underspent, but will be realized in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Also, most of our members now receive our bi-monthly newsletter electronically rather than by regular mail.

Our Get Outside! Education & Public Outreach programs, in their 3rd year and supported by external grants, continued to be very successful. The Get Outside! Kids Club and Get Outside! Preschool Club were again supported by the City of Regina Community Grant Program. We successfully applied to the TD Friends of the Environment Fund to support the Get Outside! Field Trips program to deliver programming to schools. These programs also received an "Every Bite Affects the World" Local Action Award. The Get Outside! programs were developed by Shannon Chernick and were delivered by consultants: Shannon and David Drummond for the Kids Club; Cheryl Hymus-Fraser for the Preschool Club; and Kenny Chaplin and Shannon for Field Trips.

Nature Regina provided guidance and in-kind support, and contributed \$1,370 towards the Get Outside! programs. This included \$600 towards the Preschool Club program and \$363 from donations directed to the Get Outside! programs.

Nature Regina facilitated the “Every Bite Affects the World” project, which provided funds to Nature Regina in 2021-22 to deliver it. Additional funds were received in subsequent years from sales of the book of the same title by Katherine Verrall, and donations. The project provided two Local Action Awards this year.

These activities, together with our programming related to the Native Plant Garden at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, the Bird Safe Initiative, our Hidden Valley Nature Reserve, Field Trips, the Nature City Challenge and other activities, have raised our profile in the community. This is reflected by our growing number of volunteers and memberships, and our donation revenue.

Nature Regina is grateful for the continued support of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum through a grant for our maintenance of their Native Plant Garden. We also thank the City of Regina and TD Friends of the Environment for financial support of our Get Outside! programs, and Nature Saskatchewan for a Local Society grant. Thank you to volunteers who have named Nature Regina in various community support programs; funds have been provided through this by SaskPower, 100 Men Who Care, and for the next fiscal year by Federated Co-operatives Ltd.

We are grateful to our many volunteers and supporters, and thank them for their generosity.

My volunteer time is approximately 400 hours for the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Skeel

NATURE REGINA
2022 - 23 Donors
Thank You for Your Support!

Friends (<\$25)

Anonymous (2)
Ingrid Alesich
Doug Bradford
Shirley Bartz
Roberta Cox
B & V Engel
Marie James
Shirley Klein
Dennis & Pat Lawson
Karen Lind & Joe Makan
Jeanette Lutmer & Julie Luther
Lynda Lyster
Deena McNichol
Barry & Val Mitschke
Margaret Molloy
Loanne Myrah
Shelley Schrop
Louis Schwindt
Gary Seib
Elizabeth Stoll
Maralyn Swaby

Supporter (\$25-49)

Anonymous
Velda Back
Inez Benesh
Bob Cochran
Robin Evans
Sarah James
Natalie Karchewski
Linda Langenbacher
Annie McLeod & Joel Cherry
Kathy Nolan & Art Exner
Larry Philips
Dorothy Rhead

MaryRose Stang
May & Frank Switzer

Patron (\$50-99)

Anonymous (2)
Brian & Carolyn Armstrong
Lionel & Joanne Bonneville
Erica Clark
J & M Cummings
Ruth Englund
Ken Feltin
Donna Hender
Dale & Paule Hjertaas
Helen & Lynn McCaslin
Guarav Rampal
Lorne Scott
Murray & Alison Steffenson
Lorraine Weidner

Benefactor (\$100+)

Anonymous
Jared Clarke & Kirsten Martin
Wendy Dean
Elaine Ehman
Paige Guillaume
Donna & Jim Holmes
Evelyn Jonescu
JoAnne Neely
Wayne & Caroline Pepper
Catherine Robertson
Samra Sahlu
SaskPower
Chris Selensky
Margaret Skeel & David Donald
Elizabeth Verrall
John Vinge

List of 2022– 2023 Board of Directors

Nature Regina’s Board of Directors is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. Executive positions are elected directly (president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer); other directors are elected in-general. Chairs and coordinators are appointed by the Board.

The Board of Directors meets once a month (September-June) in the week preceding the monthly meeting. If you wish to bring an item to the attention of the board, please contact the president at natureregina@gmail.com. You may also contact one of the others through this email with attention to their name in the subject line.

Board of Directors

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| President | Vacant |
| Vice President | Jeffrey Gamble |
| Secretary | Jade Fisher |
| Treasurer | Margaret Skeel |
| Past President | Elaine Ehman |
| Conservation Director | Dale Hjertaas |
| Director | Jim Elliott |
| Director | Kirsten Palmier |
| Director | Linda Langenbacher |
| Director | Shirley Bartz |
| Director | Elizabeth Verrall |
| Director | Ingrid Thiessen |

Contacts/Coordinators

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Bird Counts | Brett Quiring |
| Bird Friendly City | Elaine Ehman |
| Bird Safe Initiative | Jeffrey Gamble |
| Field Trips | Jared Clarke |
| Hidden Valley Sanctuary | Dale Hjertaas |
| Membership | Robert Antonowitsch |
| Native Prairie Garden | Gail Fennell |
| News & Notes | Helen McCaslin |
| Newsletter/MailChimp | Jim Elliott |
| Phoning | Deena McNichol |
| Program (General Meetings) | Kirsten Palmier |
| Publicity | Ingrid Alesich |
| Social | VACANT |
| Social Networking Editor | Thomas Haidl |
| Student Grant | Janet Ng |
| Webmaster | Emily Haidl |

